



# **NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

## **THESIS**

**MAXIMIZING THE INTER-SERVICE SOF HANDSHAKE**

by

Ty D. Bathurst  
Edward D. Eldridge

June 2005

Thesis Advisor:  
Second Reader:

Kalev Sepp  
Harold Trinkunas

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**MAXIMIZING THE INTER-SERVICE SOF HANDSHAKE**

Ty D. Bathurst  
Lieutenant, United States Navy  
B.S., University of Minnesota, 1998

Edward D. Eldridge  
Captain, United States Army  
B.S., Virginia Polytechnic Institute, 1995

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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June 2005**

Authors: Ty Bathurst  
Edward Eldridge

Approved by: Kalev Sepp  
Thesis Advisor

Harold Trinkunas  
Second Reader

Gordon McCormick  
Chairman, Department of Defense Analysis

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## **ABSTRACT**

U.S. Army Special Forces (SF) and the Naval Special Warfare (NSW) forces conduct numerous training missions within South America in support of the United States Special Operations Command South's (SOCSOUTH) strategy. Additionally, the two services routinely conduct similar missions with similar Host Nation (HN) forces. Historically, Army SF and NSW have lacked a strong operational 'handshake' when transitions occur between these HN units. Often, the results are redundant training of HN forces, lack of overall training continuity, a high expenditure for the results obtained, and an inability to more rapidly progress forward with HN training.

The lack of inter-service communication between the Army SF and the NSW forces becomes more significant when the number of SOF available in the Area of Responsibility (AOR) is reduced. By addressing these key issues through more efficient inter-service communication, the present forces can more adequately respond to the current and future threats in the AOR. This thesis presents ideas that may help curtail excessive spending while increasing the ability of the two Special Operations Forces service components, SF and NSW, to collectively work together with a greater understanding of each others capabilities and mission directives.

This thesis investigates several factors that affect the efficiency of U.S. forces conducting training with HN countries throughout South America and focuses specifically on the troubled areas of Colombia and the Tri-border region of Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina, and their political, economic, and demographic uniqueness. It also takes a look into how Special Operations forces should be and are currently employed in Operation Iraqi Freedom, their strategic utility and overall effectiveness. Through analyzing these factors, the thesis identifies key factors that contribute to the effectiveness of the Special Operations Forces tasked with working throughout South America and refocuses in on the operational requirements, specifically informational reporting and dissemination, which could better facilitate an inter-service handshake.

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## **I. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

The recent United States military engagements in Afghanistan and Iraq have required drawing forces from other theater Areas of Responsibility. Specifically, United States Southern Command forces have been redirected for employment in the United States Central Command Theater of operations. This draw on forces is adversely affecting the capabilities of forces dedicated to numerous operations in South America. The affect of reducing the operational capabilities of Southern Command Special Operations Forces is the decreased ability to respond to unexpected threats and contingencies that may arise in the various countries of South America.

The United States Special Operations Command South (SOC SOUTH) is Southern Command's subordinate unified command for special operations. SOC SOUTH is responsible for supporting SOUTHCOM with SOF assets and personnel within the command's Area of Responsibility (AOR). SOC SOUTH has the responsibility for building alliances within the AOR and promoting the growth of security in the region. SOC SOUTH accomplishes these activities through training host nation forces, increasing regional stability, establishing military to military relationships, and being prepared "to conduct special operations during periods of conflict and peace in support of US interests" (The Special Operations Forces Posture Statement, 2004, p. 54).

U.S. Army Special Forces (SF) and the Naval Special Warfare (NSW) forces have historically conducted numerous training missions within South America in support of SOC SOUTH's strategy. Additionally, the two services routinely conduct similar missions with similar Host Nation (HN) forces. Historically, Army SF and NSW have lacked a strong operational 'handshake' when transitions occur between these HN units. Often, the results are redundant training with HN forces, lack of overall training continuity, a high monetary expenditure for the results obtained, and an inability to more rapidly progress forward with HN training. Furthermore, the lack of inter-service communication between the Army SF and the NSW forces becomes more significant when the number of SOF available in the AOR is reduced. By addressing these key issues through more efficient inter-service communication, the present forces can better respond to the current and future threats in the AOR.

The scope of this thesis aims to address the following questions of how the Army Special Forces (SF) and Naval Special Warfare (NSW) forces can increase the efficiency of SOUTHCOM SOF specific missions with fewer forces to respond more effectively to current and future threats?

Additionally, in support of our primary research, the thesis will attempt to address the following subordinate questions:

1. What factors directly affect the stability of the SOUTHCOM theater?
2. How has the GWOT affected SOUTHCOM?
3. What is the nature of the threat in specific areas such as Colombia and the Tri-border area and how are they being addressed?
4. What role does SOF play and how are these forces defined?
5. What is the historical background of SOUTHCOM missions and how interactive have NSW and SF been in coordinating their efforts in the region?
6. What are some possible solutions for furthering the inter-service operational handshake?
7. Is there a link to connect the informational disjointedness and tie these forces into a common agenda?

The approach to these fundamental questions will be addressed as follows:

A theater analysis will be conducted to determine the broad spectrum of threats present in South America and decide whether SOF can support the requirements to sufficiently address them. The thesis will define and establish the spectrum of threats that are already present and that are likely to appear in the near future. The tentative threats to be discussed will include: regional stability, economic issues, guerrilla and terrorist activities, stability of governments, effectiveness of the civil and military institutions, security considerations, and uncontrolled areas and their impact. The thesis will focus in more detail by defining and discussing SOF utility in combating these threats and how they relate to the spectrum of threats. In this way, the manner in which SOF approaches the will become more readily apparent.

In subsequent chapters the document will undertake a case study comparison. The thesis will analyze Colombia and the Tri-border area specifically to determine



whether these “hot spots” are being sufficiently addressed. The analysis of Colombia will focus on the ongoing insurgency and the drug trafficking that continues to plague this nation, the problematic nature of its civil and military institutions, and the current U.S. assistance being provided to the country. The analysis of the Tri-border area will focus on the continuing reports of established terrorist safe havens and activities in the area, the ineffectiveness of the civil and military institutions to address the situation, and the current U.S. assistance being provided to the countries sharing borders within this area.

The strategic utility of SOF needs to be fully understood in order to achieve their proper utilization. The thesis will specifically address United States Army Special Forces and Naval Special Warfare. The thesis will also illustrate the organizational and operational capabilities of these units and their appropriate roles in addressing the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT).

In the next section, the thesis will give an analysis of data conveying historical mission areas of South America and discuss the requirements for SOF in specific nations that draw support from U.S. directives and their priorities. A matrix to derive the overall distribution of SOF throughout South America has been developed and will be utilized. Additionally, the thesis specifies case studies by addressing Colombia and the Tri-border region.

Next, the thesis will analyze current reporting formats by Special Forces (SF) and NSW forces and the inter-service flow of these documents. Initially, the focus will be on the present utilization of After Action Reports (AAR) followed by the analysis of additional reporting documents, such as the Special Operations Data and Reporting System (SODARS) and Special Operations Forces Lessons Learned Reporting System (SOFLIRS), found in subsequent interviews and research. The thesis will look at the individual service’s documents, formats, and procedures for reporting to determine the effectiveness of each for both immediate reporting and the continued synchronization of efforts within an area or a specific location. Next, the SF and NSW documents, formats, and procedures will be compared to determine the compatibility of each service’s reporting standards with the other. Finally, the thesis will propose improved synchronized utility of SF and NSW inter-service reporting coherency to better address the problems of limited forces, incessant South American threats, and the ongoing GWOT.

Articles from reputable journals provide much of the initial background information on the topic. Personal interviews have been conducted with the following organizations to verify and to obtain additional information: United States Special Operations Command (SOCOM), United States Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), SOCSOUTH, United States Special Operations Command (USASOC), Naval Special Warfare Detachment South (NSW DET SOUTH), and the U.S. Embassies in Paraguay and Colombia.

## **II. SOUTHCOM**

United States Southern Command's (SOUTHCOM) area of responsibility encompasses the land mass and surrounding waters of Latin America south of Mexico and South America. This area is approximately one-sixth of the world's total land area. Every country employs a democratic form of government and conducts national elections. Economically, the region is vital to our nation's continued prosperity. Over thirty percent of U.S. trade originates from this AOR. Brazil is the world's ninth largest economy, larger than Canada's. Over 300 million people of the area speak eight official languages: English, Spanish, Dutch, Portuguese, French, Guarani, Quechua, and Aymara. Extreme differences in geography, topography, prosperity, stability, and ethnicity uniquely characterize the theater (USSOCOM Posture Statement, 2004, p. 52).

SOC SOUTH is a subordinate command of SOUTHCOM, and both operate under the auspices and support SOCOM. SOC SOUTH supports the SOUTHCOM strategy by applying SOF capabilities to expand and strengthen alliances and security relationships. This application of SOF assures U.S. regional allies and friends of U.S. national resolve to support, defend, and advance common interests within America. It does so primarily by assisting U.S. government agencies in training Host Nation forces to combat terrorist groups and to target drug production and trafficking, as well as support interagency efforts to interdict the flow of drugs and related materials in the transit zone. Secondly, emphasis is placed on enhancing regional stability by assisting friendly nations in coping with internal and external threats to their security, while fostering professionalism and respect for human rights. Thirdly, every attempt is made to build military to military contacts that generate mutual trust, improve collective military capabilities, and promote democratic ideals. Lastly, a high degree of readiness to conduct special operations during periods of conflict and peace in support of U.S. interests is maintained (USSOCOM Posture Statement, 2004, p. 54).

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### **III. THEATER THREAT ANALYSIS AND SOUTHCOM'S GWOT**

#### **A. THEATER THREAT ANALYSIS**

The purpose of the following section is to discuss the overall SOUTHCOM theater threats. Initially, we will discuss the endemic wide-ranging problems associated with the countries and then to specifically establish the spectrum of threats already present and likely to become increasingly challenging in the future. The discussions will be focused on the general problems facing South American countries such as regional stability, economic failures, HN military police, terrorism, political environment, guerrilla activity, and the primary security concerns in the region.

##### **1. Regional Stability**

Regional stability is an ongoing problem for the majority of countries in South America. Regional stability loosely encompasses the economic, political, military and informational status of a region and is a direct indicator of a country's progressive functionality. Varying prosperity levels, governmental instability, rapid population growths, and ethnic differences characterize many of the significant issues present in the respective countries of South America. The combination of these problems and their recognition creates a likely environment for increased, future, problematic situations and conflicts. Richard Millet, a Latin American scholar, illustrates this point in *Colombia's Conflicts*, when he states "Criminal organizations could thrive, and U.S. national security concerns and resources could turn increasingly southward. None of this is inevitable, but heading off these trends will require a more urgent recognition of their growing seriousness" (2002, p. 1). Several factors that should be considered when analyzing the frail regional stability in South America are the issues of failing states, abundant lawless areas, and the numerous porous borders present throughout the region.

Failing states are those in Latin America that require outside support in order to enforce national security and employ effective governmental authority within their borders (Cirino, Elizondo, & Wawro, 2004, p. 21). There are several reasons that bring about the necessity for exogenous assistance, not the least of which is that the

democracies scattered throughout the region are so fragile. Paraguay, having been the last Latin American country to democratize in 1989, illustrates the extreme example of just how new some of these democracies are in relation to the United States. Part of the problems in South America could be that these countries have not had the benefit of time and/or resources to solidify governmental institutions and procedures.

The inability of many of these South American states to establish and maintain governmental control in their rural and outlying areas has allowed the unhindered settlement and movement of outlaw organizations throughout much of the region. These areas are commonly referred to as “lawless areas.” In defining these “lawless areas,” this study will utilize the definition presented in *South American Security Challenges* which defines these areas as “those regions not effectively controlled by the state and where rogue elements—organized crime and terrorist groups—have comfortably settled” (Cirino, Elizondo, & Wawro, 2004, p. 10). The main affect of these lawless areas is they provide the outlaw groups with the ability to function and exist with relatively little consequence from the government. In addition to the problems created by internal outlaw groups, international groups have become familiar with and taken advantage of these areas within South America consequently establishing safe havens from which to train and support their groups.

One way in which a country’s problems can become regional problems is the presence of numerous porous borders. Many of the governments in South America are struggling to maintain internal control and face major difficulties in securing their borders, much less defending them from external threats. These unrestricted borders allow successful security measures in one country to cause problems for a neighbor. An example of this “spill-over” is readily apparent in the Colombian conflict. As Colombia increases pressure on their insurgents, they take refuge in the bordering countries of Ecuador and Panama to increase their survivability. The security gains in Colombia have proven to be problematic for the surrounding countries who have not implemented adequate security measures. This example shows that porous borders not only lead to instability in specific South American countries, but in the region overall.

## **2. Economic Problems**

Problematic economic conditions in South America pose a hindrance to the growth and security of these countries. The unemployment rates in several of these countries are over 20 percent of the population in 2001 (tradeport.org). Additionally, the differences in individual income within each country create widely divided upper and lower classes without a broad middle class to energize the economy. This is recognized in the SOCOM statement that “South America has the most uneven distribution of income and wealth, where the poorest 40 percent of the population receive only 10 percent of the income” (USSOCOM, 2004, p. 53) An apparent conclusion is that the policy changes to date have not resulted in positive economic growth, much less an even distribution of wealth (Weisbrot & Rosnick, 2003, p. 11). This would seemingly create the proverbial vicious cycle of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer with no hope of correction.

Understanding the economic concerns of South America is important to conceptualize how poverty levels may directly contribute to increased security concerns for these governments. Theoretical Security Consequences of Poor Economic Performance as described by Taylor in *Latin American Security Challenges* suggests that disappointing economic performance might impact several factors of security (2004, pp. 50-51):

1. Support for democracy could weaken
2. The economic persuasions available to criminals and terrorists to undermine security operations could become more potent as the number of people who may be lured by drug traffickers and other criminal organizations and guerilla groups increases in proportion to economic insecurity.
3. Militaries and internal security forces could become less capable to address threats and more susceptible to corruption as their resources become more constrained.
4. Migration from poorly performing economies could be stimulated.
5. Conversely, the war against terrorism could make it more difficult for migrants to remit portions of their earnings back to their countries of origin.
6. Governments with sick economies could shift away from policies that encourage growth in trade and investments, thereby reversing the trend toward hemispheric integration.

7. To the extent that disappointing economic results in Latin America were perceived as the consequence of indifferent support by the U.S. government or by international financial institutions, cooperation with the U.S. government on issues across the board, including security, could become more difficult.

The U.S. has important national interest in the stability of South American economies due to the close geographic proximity, increasing terrorist activities within these countries, and the amount of trade that occurs. Notable is that when oil from Venezuela and imports from Mexico are excluded, the amount of trade is notional to the national interests of the U.S. (2005, U.S. Census Bureau). The inability of these governments to address their economic difficulties is promoting transnational terrorism. Paul Taylor, editor for the Naval War College and a Latin American expert, discusses poor macroeconomic performance and the distribution of wealth among the seven largest national economies of Latin America (2003, p. 51). How poorly these countries perform economically, coupled with increased dependency on U.S. aid, is tied directly to the degree of stability of the region and, consequently, to the threat posed to the United States.

### **3. Terrorism and Guerrilla Activities in South America**

Bombings, kidnappings, illicit drug activities, illegal arms trading, automobile smuggling, money laundering, and internet crime are daily occurrences throughout South America. The point is not simply that these crimes occur, but the frequency and ubiquitousness of these crimes South America has proven to be a fertile area for the cultivation, sale and export of drugs and terrorist activities. The root causes of this are systemic and widespread, and involve corrupt leaders who transcend international borders throughout the region. Contributing factors, such as porous borders and widespread governmental corruption, allow the free flow of pirated products, money laundering, drugs, illegal arms sales, provisions, and communications all of which create a ripe political environment conducive to political insurgencies.

The influx of Islamic fundamentalist groups such as Hamas, Hezbollah, Al Qaeda, Al-Muqawamah, Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, and the Islamic Jihad have all taken safe harbor in porous border towns and cities throughout South America (Hudson, 2003, p. 1) In addition to the Islamic fundamental influence, several insurgent and indigenous



criminal groups have also taken root in Colombia, Panama, Honduras, Paraguay, Brazil, Argentina, Peru, and Chile. International ties have been identified connecting several Middle East terrorist organizations linked to Iran, Syria, Egypt, Afghanistan and Iraq. Groups such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), Colombian National Liberation Army (ELN), and the United Self-defense Forces/Group of Colombia (AUC), dominate the countryside and influence daily living of citizens in Colombia as do the Islamic fundamentalist groups in the Tri-border region between Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina. These countries are unable, economically and politically, to address the problem sufficiently with their small and under-trained police and intelligence forces.

#### **4. Political Environment of South America**

The political instability throughout South America can also be directly attributed to porous borders, governmental corruption, and ease with which terrorist and criminal organizations work within and through the borders. The extent of corruption “coats almost every level of bureaucracy, from the highest authorities, who require large sums of money to manipulate the political-administrative machine, to the small fry: customs officers, border police, and provincial and municipal officials” (Taylor, 2003, p. 17). Additionally, the legitimacy of governmental infrastructure of these fragile democratic nations has been challenged by poor economic conditions, rapid population growth, and population dissention. Many of the fledgling democracies, such as Paraguay, simply have not had enough support to address and curtail illegal activities that often flourish after leadership changes and create a difficult political environment.

Countries such as Colombia receive billions of foreign aid from the United States to help create institutions and combat lawlessness and insurgencies. Unfortunately, the money is spent in a manner that is dictated by the supporting nations and oftentimes is not spent as the host nation would best benefit. The militaries of Colombia receive the bulk of these monies, approximately eighty percent, but very little of it is spent addressing the root cause rather than merely to the symptoms (Vaicus & Isacson, 2003, p. 6). With systemic corruption and poor economic growth, outfitting the military to combat the insurgents does not increase the popular support needed to sustain these efforts, and ironically works to the insurgents benefit. “Washington should rethink its

heavy emphasis on counter-narcotics, accept the fact that the drug problem and the insurgency are intertwined and help Colombia combat its core problems - the weakness of the armed forces and of state institutions - on a stepped-up, sustained basis” (Cook, 2001). A better mix of monetary expenditures, both to the military and in economic investments, may prove a better way to approach the problem.

The restrictions placed on supported governmental agencies have created distrust between the United States and Colombia. The government of Colombia is tied to implementing American standards of expense and subsequently reinforces failures with misaligned reward systems. “The “Leahy Amendment,” which has been part of foreign aid law since 1997, prohibits aid to foreign military units that include members who have committed gross human rights violations with impunity” (Vaicius & Isacson, 2003, p. 5). The monies that Colombia receives are contingent on strict adherence to human rights issues and are not guaranteed to be continual. This creates a sentiment of distrust between the U.S. and Colombia and furthers, in many instances, the need to focus on the military and does not create strong support from the population to the military. The positive aspect of supporting human rights is twofold in that it increases the legitimacy in both the eyes of the international community and the domestic population and that funding from international organizations becomes more readily available.

## **B. SOUTHCAM AND THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM (GWOT)**

The United States implementation of the Global War on Terrorism has brought a new push to eliminate internal subversion to the U.S. friendly, democratic governments in place. Training of allied military forces has long been a standard operating procedure for the U.S. and host nation forces as conventional and SOF forces have trained thousands of military personnel through the continent. More specifically, groups from the SF and NSW have conducted numerous missions to train local military special forces and police forces to combat terrorism. The recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, however, have drawn down the resources and priority of these missions in South America. With the necessity for large numbers of forces in the Middle East, SOUTHCAM has had to significantly reduce its military efforts in its area of operations, and regionally oriented

forces normally allocated to SOUTHCOM have been sent by the Pentagon to Afghanistan and Iraq. The consequences of this is that SOUTHCOM forces working with South American militaries do more with fewer resources and have decreased efficiency and effectiveness of the groups that do get trained.

According to the Center for International Policy's annual report of indigenous forces trained in South America, training of host nation forces falls into five broad categories: Humanitarian Assistance, Security Assistance, Humanitarian Demining Operations, Counter Drug Activities, and Counterterrorism Activities (Center for International Policy, 2004). There also is an ancillary task of maintaining military-to-military contact. Special Forces teams have deployed over 100 times each year for joint training in nearly every country in the hemisphere (CIP, 2004). The vast majority of these SOF training deployments fall into three categories: Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET), counter-narcotics training (CNT), and counter terrorism training (CT) (CIP, 2004). The goal is to give the Special Forces an opportunity to learn about the geography and demography of other nations, and to build up relationships with the military in other nations in case they are called on to rescue hostages, evacuate American citizens, conduct peacekeeping, or train forces of other nations (CIP, 2004).

Since training of foreign troops and military-to-military contact are secondary benefits of JCETs, they often resemble security assistance activities funded through the foreign assistance process such as the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program. This is particularly the case, when Special Forces are training in foreign internal defense (FID), a frequent JCET objective. According to the General Accounting Office (GAO) of the U.S. Congress, "foreign internal defense involves organizing, training, advising, and assisting host country militaries to protect their societies from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency" (CIP, 2004). Since training is a major part of the FID mission, a primary purpose of such JCETs is to train the U.S. Special Forces in how to train other militaries. These JCETs, then, may be difficult to distinguish from traditional security assistance (CIP, 2004).

The GWOT has had several affects on the SOUTHCOM theater since its initiation shortly after 9/11 both for U.S. forces as well as the governments that are experiencing

rising terrorist group activities. The tenets for addressing the GWOT have had mixed results. They have increased pressure on terrorist organizations, while at the same time lessened the focus of limited forces on the SOUTHCOM theater by reducing the number of counter-terrorism training missions. Additionally, pressure on the governments to assist in capturing and destroying terrorist infrastructure and leadership has increased. The intent of the GWOT as stated in the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism was encompassed in the “four D’s:”

**Defeat** terrorist organizations of global reach by attacking their sanctuaries; leadership; command, control, and communications; material support; and finances. **Deny** further sponsorship, support, and sanctuary to terrorists by ensuring other states accept their responsibilities to take action against these international threats within their sovereign territory. **Diminish** the underlying conditions that terrorists seek to exploit by enlisting the international community to focus its efforts and resources on the areas most at risk. **Defend** the United States, our citizens, and our interests at home and abroad by both proactively protecting our homeland and extending our defenses to ensure we identify and neutralize threats as early as possible (NSCT, 2003, pp. 11-12).

Due to ongoing requirements in OIF, SOUTHCOM engagements have significantly reduced. The limited SOF forces are needed in other areas of the globe and this need has significantly reduced the pool of SOF available to be utilized in SOUTHCOM. SOF that have traditionally fulfilled these requirements are no longer doing them, effectively reducing the preparedness of HN forces to conduct CT missions. In addition to the forces that are no longer conducting routine training with the HN, the monetary benefits that accompany these engagements are also missing. Nations such as Paraguay rely heavily on the monetary benefits that accompany HN training by U.S. forces and have had to significantly cut back their efforts due to lack of funding.

The Tri-border region has been adversely affected by the new priorities in the GWOT. Major Pablo Halaburda, an officer in the Paraguayan Special Forces, noted in a 2005 interview that the GWOT has significantly reduced the scope and frequency of U.S. SOF missions to Paraguay. He also stated that this reduction in missions to Paraguay has affected the manner in which they train by diluting foreign aid that pays for their consumable ammunition and explosives. Consequently, there has been less counter-terrorism training since the initiation of the GWOT.

This cut back on monetary, training, and military to military contact has also affected the ability of some nations in SOUTHCOM to put the pressure needed on terrorist and insurgent groups that is desired by the NSCT. Terrorist, narco-trafficking, organized crime, and corruption have flourished in the Tri-border region due to this shifting of focus outside of the SOUTHCOM theater and subsequently left many stones unturned. The United States does not have the forces to actively engage these areas with the requirements of OIF, and OEF. Until the scale of forces needed in OIF and OEF are reduced, the effects will be a continually growing safe-haven for terrorist organizations within SOUTHCOM.

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#### **IV. CASE STUDIES: COLOMBIA AND THE TRI-BORDER REGION OF BRAZIL, PARAGUAY, AND ARGENTINA**

Two regions of South America -- Colombia and the Tri-border region of Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina -- demonstrate the growing threat to security that the political, economic, and military efforts have thus far failed to adequately address. As stated previously, two factors that contribute to the development of lawless areas such as the Tri-border region and Colombia's forty-year-long insurgency are failed politics and economics. Failure to adequately address the problem has created a political environment that has stagnated in its recent efforts to secure the region and, consequently, increases the ease of activities by terror and crime groups.

##### **A. COLOMBIA**

In Colombia, a violent insurgency has grown and has been contending for power with the government since the mid 1960's. This insurgency and narco-trafficking has corrupted local as well as high-level politicians throughout the country and its effects have reverberated throughout all of South America. What originally started as a small scale insurgency has ballooned into an internationally recognized problem. Groups such as the FARC, ELN, and the AUC have grown from a local political insurgency into an international commercial insurgency, and are gradually undermining the Colombian efforts to grow economically. These groups are described in further detail in the following sections.

##### **1. Plan Colombia**

The ongoing crisis and sluggish progress in Colombia suggest that a bottom-up approach is necessary both to combat the growing insurgent threat and stabilize the country. The current Colombian -U.S. strategy to resolve the Colombian conflict is PLAN COLOMBIA. The plan is a "broad menu of proposals to deal with the economic, social, political, and military aspects of the situation" (Rabasa & Chalk, 2001, p. 61). The plan encompasses ten components that address the major issues confronting the Colombian government. These components are as follows:

1. Economic recovery
2. Fiscal and financial reform
3. A “peace strategy” for a negotiated peace settlement with the guerrillas
4. Restoration of the rule of law and security through strengthening the armed forces and police.
5. Judicial reform
6. A counter-narcotics strategy cooperating with other countries
7. Agricultural development and other economic activities to provide alternative income for coca producers
8. Popular mobilization to develop more accountability in local government, community involvement and anticorruption efforts, and pressure on the illegal armed groups to end kidnappings, violence, and the internal displacement of individuals and communities.
9. Social programs, for health, education, and alleviation of poverty
10. Mobilization of the international community to participate in the Plan (Rabasa & Chalk, 2001, pp. 61-62)

The problem with this strategy is that it has not addressed the growing insurgency which is the largest single factor in the situation. Plan Colombia is an ambitious initiative aimed at resolving the ongoing civil war in Colombia. Although the Plan Colombia program that has finally been implemented includes components which address social aid and institutional reform, the Plan Colombia label has become associated with a program of counter-narcotics and military aid for the Colombian government.

## **2. Insurgent/Terrorist Groups**

Much of the current crisis and instability in Colombia is tied to a protracted history of conflict within the country. The AUC and the ELN, which are unaffiliated with the FARC, arose in the 1960's. The AUC originated as paramilitary groups in response for the need to assist in the defense of the population against the FARC and ELN, where the state was unable to provide protection. In the 1990's, the AUC subsequently worsened the situation by participating in the illegal drug trade (Rabasa & Chalk, 2001, p. 53). These groups are speculated to have grown significantly in the last forty years and are now thought to have over 25,000 members. Speculation of numbers in 2000



illustrated that the approximate member numbers of these groups were the following: FARC—15,000; ELN—5,000; and the AUC—4,500-5,000 (Safford & Palacios, 2002, pp. 362, 366).

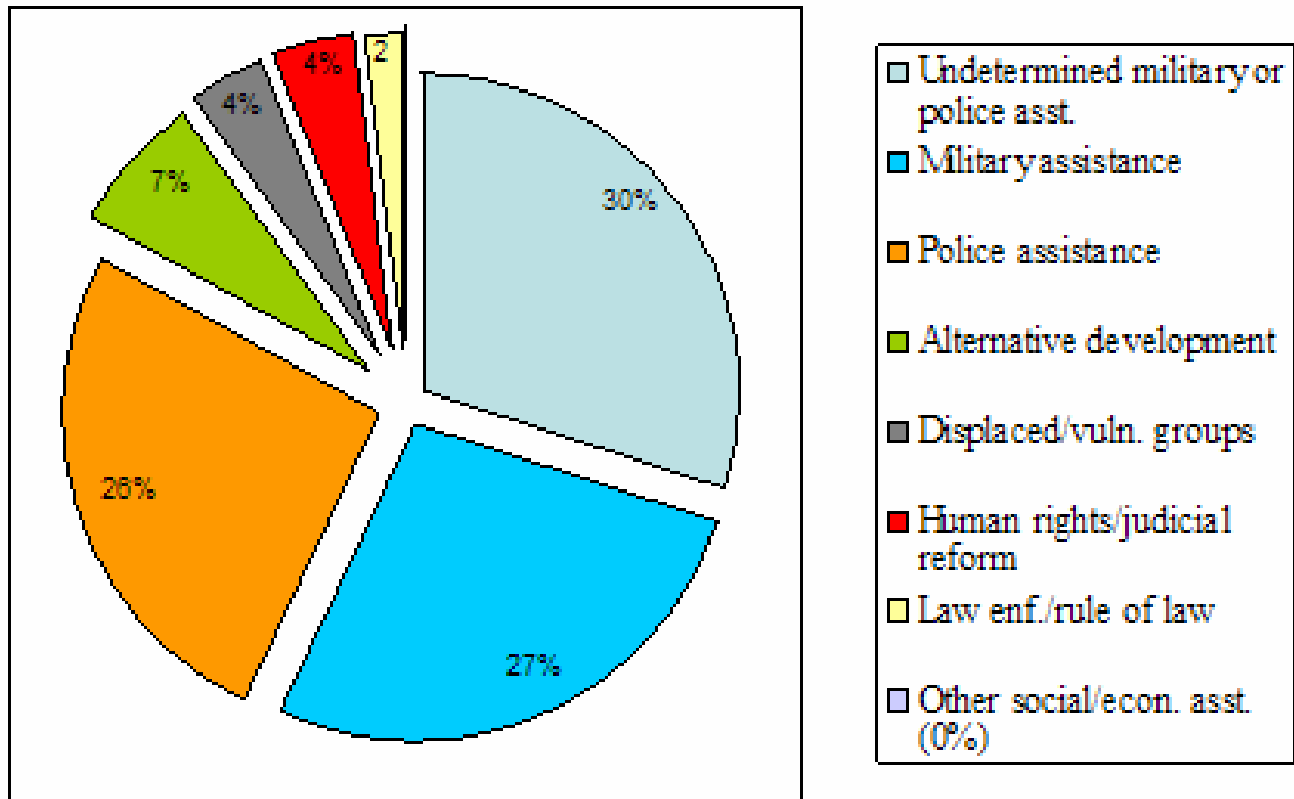
### **3. Group Activities**

The three groups are all independently tied to criminal activity for additional rewards of financial support and have been recently declared to be terrorist organizations by the Bush administration. Each of the groups is responsible for excessive kidnappings and murders throughout the country. In the 1980's and 90's, the FARC and the AUC, while they were in combat with each other, became increasingly involved in the drug trade. Mark Steinitz, Director of the Office of Analysis for Terrorism, Narcotics and Crime in the U.S. Department of States Bureau of Intelligence and Research states, "The drug-related money of these rural-based terrorists has come primarily from 'taxes' and fees levied on traffickers in return for the protection of illicit crops, labs, and shipments" (Steinitz, 2002, p. 2). Both the FARC and AUC have increasingly relied on income from illegal drug trafficking and smuggling. The ELN appears to have less connection to the drug trade, but does rely heavily on extorting large sums of money from the various oil companies in the northeastern portions of Colombia by threatening or carrying out direct acts against the pipelines. The continued actions of these groups proved to deteriorate the Colombian government's legitimacy and increase the nature of the crisis.

### **4. U.S. Monetary Contributions to Colombia**

The Colombian government's most recent answer to the growing instability came in the form of Plan Colombia. The plan encompasses ten components that address the majority of military, economic, social, and political issues that confront Colombia (Rabasa & Chalk, 2001, p. 61). The problem is not the plan, but the implementation of the plan. U.S. aid has severe restrictions on how it can be utilized (Figure 1). These low levels of financial assistance are not reaching their targeted groups due to the Colombian government's weak institutional structure (Vaicus & Isacson, 2003, p. 3). The imbalance between the financial support and implementation must be rectified to increase the probability for a successful outcome to the crisis.

Table 1. All U.S. Aid to Colombia, 1997-2003



(From “The ‘War on Drugs’ meets the ‘War on Terror’,” by I. Vaicius and A. Isacson, February 2003, *International Policy Report*, p. 6. )

In addition to the plan’s extreme focus on the Colombian military and police, the government has centered operations on drug eradication. The results of the fumigation operations are inconclusive. An additional problem that stems from this is the uncertain effectiveness of the corresponding crop substitution programs for the rural populations. Stephen Johnson, author and Senior Policy Analyst for the Heritage Foundation, states in his Executive Memorandum, *Restructure Aid to Colombia*, “Congress should shift funding from questionable crop substitution programs to efforts to strengthen weak institutions such as the judiciary and expand public services into neglected rural areas” (2003, p. 2).

Guerrilla control in the rural regions remains strong due to the Colombian government solely targeting the groups through the drug eradication program. Guerrillas influence much of the rural population through harsh means. This has minimized the guerrillas' popular support. However, the Colombian government has not been able to seize this popular support (Rabasa & Chalk, 2001, p. 29). The government has not directed sufficient efforts at the rural populations where the governmental institutions are most poorly represented. The Colombian government has mainly targeted the groups indirectly through the drug eradication program as opposed to focusing on institutional weaknesses or on the guerrillas themselves. According to Vaicius and Isacson, authors of articles that have appeared in *International Policy Reports*, state "It makes no sense to avoid assisting populations in conflictive or isolated areas—these are the zones where governance most needs to be strengthened" (2003, p. 17).

## **5. Operational Focus**

The current strategy toward Colombia is not addressing the full spectrum of issues present. Although "Plan Colombia" emphasizes many of the needed aspects for a beneficial strategy, the plan has thus far missed the mark through an unbalanced implementation. "A soldier can be stationed every few feet in a zone—but the zone still won't be secure while the population is hungry, distrustful of the state, and courted by armed groups" (Vaicius & Isacson, 2003, p. 16). The operational focus for Plan Colombia must reemphasize the necessity to create infrastructure that focuses on the populations needs to increase the validity of the government. What is needed is a more balanced approach that reduces the level of distrust between the government and the populace.

## **B. TRI-BORDER REGION OF BRAZIL, PARAGUAY, AND ARGENTINA**

The overall strategy for the Global War on Terrorism has left several stones unturned and troubled regions of the world outside of the United States Central Command have seen the growth of terrorist influence while the attention is not on them. This is particularly a problem in the Tri-Border region of Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina. To combat the complex network of international terrorist threats requires the

implementation of multilateral agreements coupled with a common focus. An analysis of how information sharing between the Argentinean, Brazilian, and Paraguayan intelligence agencies must be completed in order to better address issues such as transnational terrorist threats is paramount in addressing the problematic area. Significantly in the absence of a multilateral approach, the problem will simply relocate. This is what Osama bin Laden did in 1996, moving from Sudan to Afghanistan, and reemerging undaunted in 1998. Comparatively, the correction of the problem in one Tri-Border country does not constitute protection within the other Tri-Border countries.

The Tri-border region is a good example of how terrorist and criminal organizations can operate in a free trade zone and send their profits globally to support large terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda, Hamas and Hezbollah (Hudson, 2003, p. 27). The city of Ciudad Del Este, that borders Paraguay and Brazil, is one of the most frequented areas by terrorists because of the ease of money laundering and widespread drug trafficking (Hudson, p. 3). Reports of governmental corruption, money laundering, organized crime including murder, counterfeiting, product piracy, and terrorist grouping and organization all are reported to thrive with impunity (Hudson, p. 3). Additionally, the law enforcement agencies that have tried to curtail activities in this area have been stopped short by laws regulating their targeting and infiltration into religious organizations. For example; "Islamic money laundering is concealed by the common practice of the local Arab community of remitting funds to relatives in the Middle East" and is not easily detected by authorities. When it is detected, the authorities lack sufficient evidence to prosecute (Hudson, p. 27). Organizations have been used as fronts for training terrorist groups and providing sanctuary. Osama Bin Laden has been known to use religious entities as fronts for training terrorists and provide a hiding place for Islamic fugitives (Hudson, p. 20).

The Tri-Border region has been referred to as a terrorist safe-haven, the "Wild West," a lawless frontier, and a new base for terrorist funding for Arab and Islamist extremists by many who have studied the region (Hudson, p. 1). Organized crime groups, terrorist groups, and narcotics traffickers flourish in the region centered on the cities of Ciudad Del Este in Paraguay, Foz do Iguacu, and Puerto Iguazu. In recent years, there have been allegations by intelligence agencies that the area isn't just a collection of

freewheeling border towns, but a major center for groups on the U.S. terrorist watch list. New claims have arisen that from this area the next major attack against United States interests will originate (Hudson, p. 19).

Indigenous and non-indigenous organized crime groups such as Hezbollah, Russian and Lebanese mafias, the “Local Connection” of corrupt officials and politicians, the Morel family in Paraguay, as well as crime syndicates from China, Colombia, Corsica, Ghana, Italy, Ivory Coast, Japan, Korea, Lebanon, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia and Taiwan are reported to have a foothold in the area (Hudson, p. 40).

A 2003 report prepared by the Federal Research Division, Library of Congress under an Interagency Agreement with the United States Government documented that money laundering has flourished in recent years (Hudson, p. 51). Since 2000-2001 money laundering has averaged US\$12 billion annually and has been as high as US\$25 billion in 2000. An equivalent of fifty percent of Paraguay’s gross domestic product is reportedly laundered annually in Paraguay, practically all in the Ciudad Del Este area. Crime and terrorist groups use automobile theft and smuggling, counterfeiting and piracy of products such as compact discs and DVD’s, bogus real estate sales, and internet crime such as identity theft and extortion to gouge money from the locals and visitors to the Foz do Iguacu tourist area (Hudson, p. 51).

The efforts made thus far, according to Hudson, have been “hindered by institutional problems of corruption, inadequate funding and investigative capabilities, poor training, lack of motivation, inadequate penal codes, and so forth” (Hudson, p. 61). Clearly this region is in turmoil and may be the next front for United States forces in the GWOT. Although several arrests have taken place as the three countries attempt to tighten controls, the problem appears to be systemic and will require much more than the occasional arrest to quell.

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## **V. THE ROLE OF SOF**

The purpose of the following section is to identify the role that SOF plays in addressing global threats, and to clearly establish how these forces are defined and utilized within that role. The current SOCOM mission statement parallels the role of SOF in the continuing implementation of the GWOT strategy:

SOCOM plans, directs, and executes special operations in the conduct of the War on Terrorism in order to disrupt, defeat, and destroy terrorist networks that threaten the United States, its citizens and interests worldwide. SOCOM organizes, trains, and equips special operations forces provided to Geographic Combatant Commanders, American Ambassadors and their country teams (USSOCOM Posture Statement, 2004).

### **A. CHALLENGES**

According to the SOCOM, 2004 posture statement, there are two primary challenges that SOF will face in the upcoming years. First is the role that SOF will be required to address in the GWOT. Secondly is the need for SOF to transform their forces to allow full utility of and improve their inherent qualities of speed, precision, lethality, stealth, survivability, and sustainability in the GWOT. The role of SOF more clearly will be to “disrupt terrorist organizations and bring their members and supporters to justice- or take justice directly to them” (USSOCOM Posture Statement, 2004, p. 3).

### **B. NATIONAL DIRECTIVES**

The two national directives that give bearing to the utilization of military forces in regional theaters are the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism and the Special Operations Command directives. These are the basis for understanding how Special Operations are implemented and whether their utility is being maximized with their implementation. A broad understanding of the desired overall end-state, as well as the conditions outlined for meeting that end-state, are imperative in determining strategic utility for special operations and the forces that conduct them. Challenging in this

endeavor are the parameters defining what SO are and determining their role given their respective directives. The remainder of this paper will analyze the significant approaches that can be utilized to maximize the ability to properly employ Special Operations in a changing world to obtain their appropriate utility.

In responding to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 the United States immediately enacted the Global War on Terrorism. Significantly, the GWOT has required the intensive employment of SOF around the globe. Linda Robinson, veteran war correspondent and author of *The Tip of the Spear*, states in *U.S. News and World Report*, “They [SOF] have performed superbly in Iraq and Afghanistan, but they have largely operated at the behest of conventional commanders in both places. In countries where the United States is not at war”, [such as those in South America], “SOCOM forces have operated under the watchful eyes of ambassadors and CIA station chiefs” (Robinson, 2004). The utilization of these elite forces can be seen in many overt instances, as demonstrated through their actions in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Additionally, SOF is being utilized globally in less observable aspects -- i.e. covert operations -- in support of the GWOT and national directives. Significantly, SOF has been and continues to be seen, as a key actor with a leading role in the GWOT.

### **C. SOCOM MISSION**

The command that heads these SOF is the United States Special Operations Command. This command was created in 1987 by the Cohen-Nunn amendment to the Goldwater-Nichols Act, to provide the President with a special operations asset that would be trained and capable of joint service operations. Specifically, SOCOM is responsible for ensuring highly trained and equipped forces are readily deployable for low intensity combat operations such as the historical DESERT ONE in Iran, OPERATION URGENT FURY in Grenada, OPERATION JUST CAUSE in Panama, and ongoing combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The birth of SOCOM brought the services’ SOF together under one command. The three components of SOCOM created by legislation were the U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC), the Naval Special Warfare Command



(NAVSPECWARCOM), and the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC). The SOCOM structure provides the nation, through regional combatant commanders, special operations forces for employment worldwide. The use of special operations forces directly ties to the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism and focuses on identifying and removing threats before they reach our borders” (NSCT, 2003, pp. 11-12).

U.S. Special Operations Forces are currently being utilized in support of the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (NSCT) as well as the United States Special Operations Command directives. These directives are the basis for understanding how Special Operations are implemented and whether their utility is being maximized. A broad understanding of the desired overall end-state, as well as the conditions outlined for meeting that end-state, are imperative in determining strategic utility for Special Operations and the forces that conduct them. The problem is that Special Operations and the forces that make-up SOF are poorly delineated with regards to their roles given their respective directives.

Special Operations Forces have been tasked as the premier force in the GWOT in support of NSCT directives. They are utilized globally by the Regional Combatant Commanders both overtly as well as covertly operating in South America, Asia, Europe, Africa, and extensively in the Middle East, respectively. Their main role lies in the first, second, and third orders of the NSCT of defeating, denying and diminishing terrorists and their organizations and less so in the fourth which is confined to operations within the United States.

#### **D. DEFINITION AND FUNCTION OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS**

Part of the complexity about the exact role of special operations in implementing the GWOT strategy is raised by the fundamental question of how special operations are defined. Strategist Colin Gray points out that “the boundary line between special operations and regular warfare is not always clear. ... [and that] strategic understanding mandates careful attention to definitions” (1996, p. 149). Interestingly, there are a multitude of definitions from various sources that are widely accepted by military and government officials. However, it is important to note that no single definition has thus

far been accepted as the standing, sole definition. The two definitions presented below are an attempt to illustrate both the broad and detailed nature of defining special operations and the likely consequences of each on determining the role of special operations.

Operations conducted in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to achieve military, diplomatic, informational, and/or economic objectives employing military capabilities for which there is no broad conventional force requirement. These operations often require covert, clandestine, or low visibility capabilities. ...Special operations differ from conventional operations in degree of physical and political risk, operational techniques, mode of employment, independence from friendly support, and dependence on detailed operational intelligence and indigenous assets (Joint Pub 3-05, 2003, p. I-1).

The above definition provides a description of special operations; however, there are several aspects of special operations that are left out of this definition such as the use of “unorthodox means” and “innovation.” In addition, this detailed definition does not specify those forces that fit these parameters. Also, this definition does not indicate how conventional forces conducting covert, clandestine or low-visibility operations with a high degree of physical or political risk would be classified. Thus, one sees the difficulties inherent in truly defining special operations. There are many missions that special operations are tailored to conduct; however, the problem that often arises is that individuals, oftentimes outside of the SOCOM, will look to definitions to delineate whether a special operation fits or does not fit within a current situation. Understanding how to best employ special operations cannot be derived solely from definitions and beliefs. As Chris Lamb, a former staff member of ASD/SOLIC and former Assistant to the Secretary of Defense illustrates later in this paper, certain questions must be asked to determine the proper implementation of special operations.

On the opposing end, John Arquilla, professor at the Naval Postgraduate School, defines special operations much more broadly and with a more historically inclusive perspective. Arquilla states that “special operations are that class of military (or paramilitary) actions that fall outside the realm of conventional warfare during their respective time periods” (1996, pp. xix-xx). In addition to providing a broad means to differentiate various historical special operations, this definition illustrates that all special operations are not a black and white undertaking. Arquilla’s definition takes into account

the changes in military classifications, i.e., conventional versus special operations and how each situation may require a different implementation of special operations in order to provide strategic utility. In his book, *Explorations in Strategy*, Gray explains, “The prime concern is not to explain how to conduct special operations, but instead to explore the differences such operations can make for the course and outcome of a conflict” (1996, p. 141). Understanding the definitional differences and confusion that may arise, one must look further in finding an easier approach to understand and determine the functional role of special operations.

Gray identifies six points of interest to clarify special operations:

1. Special Operations are qualitatively different from irregular warfare, not a subcategory of it.
2. Special Operations, although unique in their various means, function strategically in ways equivalent to all other kinds of operations.
3. Although special operations and SOF display some of the same organizational and tactical features, regardless of time, place, or circumstances, the definition of special operations and forces as “special” vary among political and strategic cultures.
4. A broad study of Special Operations seems to indicate a trained incapacity on the part of conventional military minds to grasp the principles of special warfare.
5. In an important sense, Special Operations comprise a “unique” state of mind, with an approach to the challenges of conflict.
6. Special Operations are political-military activities tailored to achieve specific, focused objectives (with occasional exceptions) and conducted by units, which adapt with great flexibility to the demands of each challenge (1996, pp. 149-152).

These points reiterates the necessity to have a uniform definition of Special Operations that is directly tied to the functionality of their use and understood by high level decision-makers in both definitional and functional aspects that openly translate into actions taken by the forces conducting these operations. Gray’s points effectively tie together the detailed view of Special Operations that SOCOM establishes as their focal point, and the broad spectrum that Arquilla presents that decision-makers should have as their fundamental perception of Special Operations. Arguably Special Operations should

be viewed not as pinpoint operations that are executed by designated groups, but rather operations that contribute to the overall strategic military and political purpose in a given region or globally.

#### **E. STRATEGIC UTILITY**

Strategic utility and tactical utility are the main purposes behind the use of Special Operations Forces (SOF) in any conflict and they define whether their use is appropriate in the macro picture of achieving victory in conflict. Lacking the ability to clearly define special operations, it is difficult to evaluate strategic utility. Therefore, for the purposes of this thesis, strategic utility is defined and will be discussed throughout the remainder of this document as “the contribution of a particular kind of military activity to the course and outcome of an entire conflict.” Secondly, tactical utility is defined as: “the effectiveness of the tactics utilized to achieve strategic utility” (Gray, 1996, p. 148).

In addition to strategic and tactical utility, one must consider how “success” or “failure” is defined, as the definitions of either for special operations are not straightforward. One can see the lack of clarity when evidence that “tactical failure at the right time, in the right way, and for the right reasons can amount to strategic success” (Gray, 1999, p. 1). Strategic utility may not be readily anticipated by the decision-makers with regards to second and third order effects, as these take time to discover. For example, one must consider the consequences of special operations on both the antagonist as well as the protagonist involved in order to determine their strategic utility. In addition to the strategic utility, the operational capabilities are clearly outlined by the doctrinal priorities for special operations (Joint Pub 3-05, 2003, p. II-3).

#### **F. OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES FOR SPECIAL OPERATIONS**

The capabilities of SOF must be examined in order to determine their utility in fighting the GWOT. SOF must be utilized in accordance with their capabilities to help ensure mission success. SOF provides significantly different capabilities than that of conventional forces. SOCOM posture statement indicates:

While other U.S. military units can conduct certain types of special operations, no other force in the world has the range of capabilities

possessed by the U.S. SOF. SOF provide capabilities that expand the options available to the employing commander, however they are not the ideal solution to all problems requiring a military response (Special Operations Command Posture Statement, 2003, pp. 30).

Appropriate SOF utilization should fall into their primary core tasks as outlined in the 2003-4 USSOCOM Posture Statement that they are prepared to conduct. These core tasks are:

1. Counter Terrorism (CT)
2. Counter Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)
3. Special Reconnaissance (RS)
4. Direct Action (DA)
5. Unconventional Warfare (UW)
6. Information Operations (IO)
7. Psychological Operations (PSYOPS)
8. Foreign Internal Defense (FID)
9. Civil Affairs Operations (CA)

The importance of core tasks varies from theater to theater and is prioritized according to their specific employment necessities. For example, the Central Command (CENTCOM) theater is utilizing SOF to fit into counter-terrorism, direct action, and counter proliferation roles, while, in the Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) theater, Foreign Internal Defense (training indigenous forces), and Civil Affairs Operations are the primary directives in training military and indigenous personnel against internal subversion.

The operational priorities of SOF, as outlined by the 2003-2004 USSOCOM Posture Statement, which are designed in support of meeting the national security challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, are as follows and listed in priority:

1. Preempt global terrorists and Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and High yield explosive threats.
  - The number one priority is to expand and enhance existing capabilities for dealing with adversaries abroad that pose mortal threats to our people, our nation and our way of life.
2. Enhance Homeland Security
  - Support the needs of conventional forces and other government agencies as they perform their primary mission of defending the U.S. Homeland.

3. Perform Unconventional Warfare and serve as a conventional force multiplier in conflict against state adversaries.
  - Through the use of indigenous personnel and technological advances, further the ability to fight against terrorist and rogue regimes and have human intelligence collection abilities on sight.
4. Conduct Proactive Stability Operations
  - Provide provisional support from friendly governments trying to defeat insurgent or other criminal movements within their borders. Countering internal enemies.
5. Execute Small Scale Contingencies
  - Rely on the intrinsic capabilities of SOF to quickly deploy and conduct small scale contingency operations i.e. Noncombatant Evacuation Operations (NEO), Personnel Recovery (PR) etc. and meet the operational requirements.

These established priorities are important in the GWOT, but it is not explained how these priorities move from the written statement to actual implementation. For this, an analysis of current operations is needed to see that transition. The use of SOF in conflict must be analyzed to determine whether the end state is most effectively achievable with their strategic utility in the given operational conditions that may surround the conflict itself.

Operational conditions precluding the use of SOF as outlined by Chris Lamb are important in discussing the utilization of Special Operations and the forces that conduct these operations in support of the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism. Lamb outlined appropriate questions to consider prior to the use of SOF activities in order to help determine the manner in which they are being used. Contrasting this with current operations shows that the use of SOF in roles they are best suited for may be problematic in determining their strategic utility.

Based on the following tenets, the desired operational end state should define the mission and players, rather than the force. Correspondingly, tactical and/or strategic mission success is not always indicative of the effectiveness of special operations. As the operational environment changes, the forces that are conducting missions will be utilized in concert with the ability to achieve success. However, the operational environment, intelligence, and situational requirements are constantly in flux (Rothstein, 2004).

Lamb's tenets for proper utilization of SOF closely parallel those outlined in the USSOCOM Posture Statement. These are:

1. Does the mission have as a necessary condition for success the requirement that it be undertaken by Special Operations Forces?
  - If the answer is definitively yes, then SOF should be utilized as a primary player in accomplishing those objectives.
  - If the answer is no, then SOF should not perform the mission unless as a collateral activity to augment conventional forces.
2. Will the odds of mission success significantly increase if performed by special operations forces?
  - If the answer is yes, then the mission could and should be performed by special operations forces as a collateral activity in addition to their primary mission.
  - If no, then SOF should not perform the mission.
3. Will the mission only be marginally better if it is performed by special operations forces?
  - If the answer is yes, then the mission is not appropriate to utilize those forces.
4. Will the mission *not* be performed better if conducted by special operations forces?
  - If the answer is yes, then the mission is inappropriate for special operations forces.

#### **G. WAR AIMS OF OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF)**

Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, outlined the war aims of the Bush administration in Iraq prior to the commencement of Operation Iraqi Freedom specific objectives in apparent order of priority. He declared, "Our goal is to defend the American people, to eliminate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, and to liberate the Iraqi people" (Record, 2004, pp. 73-4). The stated goals can be determined to be Special Operations appropriate, however their determination is based on the current political-military state of affairs. This study's analysis of these stated aims follows each goal and this study has individually assessed whether the use of SOF fit Lamb's criteria for use, and to what extent that use falls as a primary SOF mission, collateral, or non-SOF mission criteria.

The missions that follow these taskings could feasibly fall into primary, collateral or non-SOF mission criterion depending on the operational environment created while attempting to exact those goals. These are:

1. End the regime of Saddam Hussein by striking with force on a scope and scale that makes clear to the Iraqis that he and his regime are finished.
  - a. A mostly conventional operation, with the exception of targeting selected buildings which may contain High Value Targets (HVT) or conducting reconnaissance on possible targets for future air strikes, is appropriate.
  - b. Primary SOF, however, is mission dependent.
2. Identify, isolate and eventually eliminate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems, production capabilities, and distribution networks.
  - a. Conducting reconnaissance and direct action missions to eliminate possible WMD can be completed by SOF.
  - b. Could also be done with conventional Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols (LRRP) augmented by air assets.
  - c. A primary mission for SOF is counter proliferation.
3. Search for, capture, drive out terrorists who have found safe harbor in Iraq.
  - a. Could be conducted in large scale combat operations by conventional units with SOF as augmenters.
  - b. A primary mission for SOF Counter-terrorist (CT) units behind enemy held territory or areas would prove more difficult to infiltrate with the use of larger, conventional units.
4. Collect such intelligence as we can find related to terrorist networks in Iraq and beyond.
  - a. Though a typically conventional intelligence, Other Government Agency (OGA), or R/S operations could be a collateral activity as this is only marginally better when conducted by SOF when working with the indigenous populace. However, collecting intelligence through building relationships with indigenous personnel is a primary mission for SOF, unconventional warfare (UW).
  - b. Not a primary mission but can be a collateral mission.
5. Collect such intelligence as we can find related to the global network of illicit weapons of mass destruction activity.
  - a. Primarily a CIA, FBI, SOF, and other intelligence collection agencies working in coordination with DOD personnel.
  - b. Marginal gains from local SOF operations would be made through collection of High Value Targets (HVT) by SOF.



- c. Interrogations will produce more in-depth international connections. This is a collateral activity, although primarily useful for local areas that can have global implications. The value of utilizing SOF is mission dependent.
  - d. Mostly non-SOF unless conducted by ARMY SF Psychological Operations (PSYOP) units.
- 6. End sanctions and immediately deliver humanitarian relief, food and medicine to the displaced and to the many needy Iraqi citizens.
  - a. Strictly a conventional operation. This would waste valuable SOF assets in performing this as a mission.
  - b. Conventional, not a SOF mission criterion.
- 7. Secure Iraq's oil fields and resources, which belong to the Iraqi people, and which they will need to develop their country after decades of neglect by the Iraqi regime.
  - a. This would not be better performed with the limited number of personnel required to secure an oil field, with the exception of eliminating threats within the oil fields and then augmented by conventional forces.
  - b. Take-down of selected HVT is primarily conducted by SOF including when searching for HVT within those areas.
- 8. Help the Iraqi people create the conditions for a rapid transition to a representative self-government that is not a threat to its neighbors and is committed to the territorial integrity of that country.
  - a. Non-military organizations take the primary role in these operations.
  - b. Training of forces is mission dependent to help reach this goal. Could be a primary UW goal for SOF or conventional forces providing security operations in the vicinity.

Of these stated goals, the appropriate use of SOF personnel could be attained in the desired end state; more specifically goals 1, 2, and 3 are appropriate primary goals. Goals 4 and 5 could be classified as collateral duties. The remaining goals may warrant SOF personnel under certain circumstances which include their primary and/or collateral duties. Although these goals contain criterion for SOF specific missions, all are operations that could entail SOF personnel working as the primary actor or in support of conventional forces as security.

## **H. SOF ROLE SUMMARY**

The unique capabilities of SOF have not gone overlooked by the current U.S. administration. Special Operations must continue to adhere to the strategic characteristics

that are represented by the NSCT and the SOCOM directives. In following these directives, there has been substantial success achieved by SOF around the world for example, Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. In accordance with section 167 of the Goldwater-Nichols act, SOF is playing a key role through its core and collateral tasks such as humanitarian assistance, HN training, civil affairs, and direct action operations (CIP, 2004).

In light of the successes achieved by the United States Special Operations Command, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld provided the command with increased responsibility for planning and directing worldwide counterterrorism operations (Feickert, 2004, p. 1). The most significant beneficial factor to optimize increased responsibility seems to be that the special operations forces will now be able to prepare, plan, and implement their missions. As with the conventional forces, when the command with responsibility for training and equipping the forces has the ability to primarily affect their implementation, the results should be more well-planned, efficient and successful.

Arguably, SOCOM could provide better direction as to how to properly employ special operations over conventional commanders. Although previously done effectively in support of conventional commanders, having SOF leadership in charge of their own strategic mission planning and implementation will be dually beneficial. First, the operations will be more specific to fit the capabilities of SOF. Conventional commanders typically do not have much operational experience with SOF and oftentimes do not comprehend exactly the unique capabilities SOF brings to the table. For example, the first Gulf War was commanded by a conventional forces commander, General Norman Schwarzkopf. Author and military analyst, Susan Marquis, posits “Although it is very likely that Schwarzkopf, given his background with the most conventional of conventional forces, had misgivings about SOF, it is also true that by the end of the Persian Gulf War he seems to have developed respect for their capabilities” (Marquis, 1997, p. 232). SOF was given a minimal role in the first Iraq War due to this conventional misconception of SOF capabilities.

Second, with SOF commanders in charge of their own forces, they would be better able to pair missions with SOF capabilities. Close coordination with conventional commanders would ensure that specific missions are planned and conducted in

accordance to capabilities and the appropriate forces, rather than a desire to get in the game. For example, the Paitilla airfield operation during OPERATION JUST CAUSE in Panama in 1988 where SEALs were presented with a mission inconsistent with their capabilities. Subsequently, a mission more appropriate for a conventional unit such as the U.S. Army Rangers resulted in four dead and eight wounded SEALs (Marquis, p. 195).

Having taken a broad look into some of the difficulties surrounding the utilization of SOF and when their use is most *appropriate*. It is indicative that the grey area surrounding the use of special operations is fraught with variability and is a topic that needs to be *addressed prior to implementation* of specific missions. The directives provided to the U.S. military, specifically the NSCT and SOCOM directives, give marginally clear direction to the utilization of special operations. It is the confusion that arises between the definitions, expectations, and directives and subsequently putting them into action, however, that can lead to misuse of forces, poor coordination, and misunderstanding of outcome, success, by the decision-making groups. One must continually fine tune definitions, reevaluate every operation, past, present, and future, and address the fundamental questions related to their utility in order to maximize the effectiveness of our military forces, whether they are conventional or Special Operation Forces.

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## **VI. SOUTHCOM HISTORICAL MISSION AREAS**

As demonstrated by the data from 2003 Joint Combined Exchange for Training (JCET) missions (See APPENDIX A), the utilization of Special Operations Forces to train foreign militaries has been at the forefront of U.S. policy for the SOUTHCOM area of operations. The data indicates the country, type of training, number of personnel trained, location, unit trained and the U.S. forces that conducted that training. However, as indicated, many of the forces were trained by both NSW and SF forces during different time periods. However, many of the individuals trained conducted redundant training with both services throughout the year. This indicates an overlap of training and an unnecessary expenditure of personal effort and resources.

## A. CIP SUMMARY CHART

Table 2. 2003 Missions to South America by U.S. SOF

COUNTRY	TRANING GROUP	NUMBER OF MISSIONS 2002, 2003
Bahamas	NSW	0/1
Belize	SF, SF	0/1
Bolivia	USMC, SF/NSW/ USMC	3/4
Chile	NSW,SF	1/1
Colombia	SF, NSW, SF/NSW	24/30
Costa Rica	NSW, SF, NSW	2/1
Dominican Republic	SF,NSW	1/1
Ecuador	NSW/ USAFSF/ USMC, NSW/ USAFSF/ USMC	11/3
El Salvador	SF	3/0
Honduras	SF, NSW	3/1
Nicaragua	NSW	0/1
Panama	SF/NSW	0/6
Paraguay	SF,SF/NSW	2/2
Peru	NSW, SF, SF/NSW	5/4
Suriname	NSW	1
Trinidad & Tobago	NSW	1
Uruguay	SF	1
Venezuela	SF	1

## B. INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Based on the collated data from Table 2 and the summary chart (see Appendix A), one can see that in 2003, NSW and SF forces have primarily focused their efforts in

Colombia and Panama, followed by Peru, Bolivia and then Ecuador and Paraguay. Data from the same source shows that in 2002 there were significantly more countries included in the JCET missions. In 2002, the priority countries were Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Honduras, Bolivia, Costa Rica, and Paraguay. As indicated, the Tri-border countries of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay have received little or no attention. This volatile border region is continuing to provide safe-haven for criminal and terrorist organizations. This data is indicative of monetary, military aid and priority to respective countries (CIP, 2004).

The data shows South America is receiving numerous U.S. military training missions. These missions are split between the SF and NSW forces and are focused on Colombia. Less obvious countries have moved lower on the list of priorities. As Table 2 illustrates, both NSW and SF forces have routinely conducted missions in SOUTHCOM. Although they do not typically train the same individuals within the HN, they do integrate their Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTP) as HN individuals rotate in and out of their units. This integration raises the issue of coordination. NSW and SF need to be familiar with each others TTP's in order to constructively build on HN capabilities. In order to coordinate their efforts, NSW and SF forces must build on each others knowledge and more constructively integrate these TTP's into their own.

As OIF and OEF are drawing forces into Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Philippines, the SOF efforts in South America have been reduced. Money to support these missions has remained steady; however, the forces available to conduct them have been significantly reduced by a significant percentage (specifics classified) since 9/11. Data on monetary aid to South America can be misleading due to where the funding is spent, and allocated versus previous years. Although the aid has remained steady, distribution of the aid has significantly shifted to higher priority countries, especially Colombia. Therefore, it is imperative that SOF continue to operate in the region with increased efficiency to compensate for their reduced operational capacity to non-priority regions.

Emerging reports indicate growing terror and crime organizations in the Tri-border region (Hudson, 2003). The SOUTHCOM country emphasis too must reflect this

changing environment. Colombia is in need of military and economic aid to fight their internal subversion and terror organization in the FARC, ELN, and AUC and aid to Colombia has reflected this need. The growing internal subversion and rise in lawlessness in the Tri-border area needs to move up significantly to adequately address the problematic nature arising in the area.



## **VII. REPORTING FORMATS**

Variations in reporting formats and reports actually submitted pose major difficulties to inter-service communication. There are a wide number of reports that are required to be submitted by SOF ground level commanders at multiple levels of command. Among these reports, SOCOM considers several reports to be paramount to the preservation of inter-service communication and are SOCOM command directed reporting. These reports are the Special Operations Data and Reporting System (SODARS) and the After Action Report (AAR). In addition to these reports, the Special Operations Forces Lessons Learned and Reporting System (SOFLIRS) is also being utilized; however, this reporting format is not currently a requirement. Currently, reporting formats and the submission process within each service are not standardized. Several of the problems that are apparent are the lack of information passing within and between the services, differing beliefs on the importance of information held at each level, misunderstanding or noncompliance by the services to SOCOM reporting directives. The result of these problems is the increased difficulty of inter-service communication. By addressing these issues, SOCOM can greatly enhance the inter-service information sharing and provide a probable solution to the inter-service handshake.

A key factor in establishing efficiency between SF and NSW is not only the creation of a central SOF repository for AARs, but mandating the submission of these reports. Currently, there is a central database at SOCOM which makes the SOF reports that have been received available to the SOF community. Reports have either not been written or have not been passed on to SOCOM for all missions conducted by NSW and SF to date. The goal of the reporting system is to create a standard and complete database that provides all SOF elements with access to prior information obtained. NSW and SF follow different procedures for writing and passing on of their AARs. The end result is that the process of writing, submitting, and accessing these reports has not been enforced across the services which has prevented inter-service communication.

Each SOF team, upon return to Continental United States (CONUS), is required by SOCOM to fill out a formal report that identifies; who, what, when, and where of

completed missions. Additionally, any pertinent information that indicates a change in TTPs, significant events, or problems associated with preparation, logistical support, implementation of Mission Essential Task Lists (METL), or significant HN developments is to be included. The format used is mandated by SOCOM and is titled SODARS. SOCOM requires these reports to be completed in the SODARS format or its equivalent AAR. Once completed, this report is collated and reviewed by personnel in SOCOM who then complete the reporting process by adding the information to a database that can then be accessed by future missions working with the same location, or individuals.

Enforcing the submission of these reports has proven problematic. Discussion with SOCOM's Military Capabilities Studies Branch (MCS) illustrated that compliance with the directives is not occurring within the services for several reasons. There is a strong belief that the writers, SF team and NSW platoon leaders, of these reports do not understand the significance of the information that they are asked to provide. Rather, the general belief is that these reports are an additional task that does not provide any significant results to their respective units or SOF. Additionally, parent commands have had differing views on whether the information obtained by their subordinates is relevant to the larger SOF community as a whole regardless of how insignificant the results from the individual reports may appear. As a consequence, large numbers of these reports are regularly retained at subordinate levels or are not submitted altogether.

In addition to reports not being correctly submitted and/or getting to the SOCOM database, the knowledge held of the database by NSW Platoon Commanders and SF Team Leaders has not been professionally developed. This is usually identified in retrospect as past mission leader's progress to higher positions within the SOF community. The key to addressing this unfamiliarity with the reporting process and the impact of the information database lies with senior leadership above the Platoon/Team Commander level. The goal should be to illustrate the importance of the reports not only to SOF, but to outside organizations as well.

The utilization of the central SOF repository provides several benefits; condenses the issues surrounding force protection, provides future recommendations for training, builds on ongoing relationships and disseminates points of contacts (POC), decreases

amount of time wasted on logistical considerations, and provides general and specific knowledge of environmental factors.

Force protection is always a major consideration for all personnel traveling to foreign countries. The central database could provide up-to-date information on the safety of individuals, contingency planning, and other threat awareness topics. The information falls in a spectrum from common criminal activity to major combat that all U.S. personnel should be aware in a specific country. Suggested safety precautions can range from infectious disease prevention to incidents of criminal activity. In this way, the central database could provide an excellent means to increase SOF and other governmental agency awareness.

The central repository could also provide future recommendations for training. The database has the ability to minimize the redundancy of U.S. military training, address the needs of the HN, and facilitate possible future inter-service coordination. Redundant U.S. military training could be successfully minimized both within and between individual services. The central repository would allow an access point for personnel to retrieve pertinent information to facilitate building on past actions as opposed to regression or repeating of past actions. This becomes readily apparent when discussing specific HN units trained in various countries. The HN typically wants to maximize training received and to progress to higher levels of proficiency. This could effectively be identified and addressed through a central repository. In addition to increasing efficiency within the SF, for example, this would increase the inter-service communication by centrally locating reports that each service could readily access.

Building on ongoing relationships and maintaining established POCs within various countries where the U.S. deploys is paramount to future operations. The avoidance of reinventing the wheel allows U.S. personnel to dedicate their time and energy to the task at hand rather than having to establish new relationships. Oftentimes, new relationships and contacts may be required; however, building upon past relationships would prove to be more efficient and practical. Deploying personnel would benefit from an established central repository that provided routine contacts from rental car company POCs to training liaison officers in the country. Knowing these simple facts

prior to deployment not only saves time, but allows personnel to better plan prior to deployment.

Along the same lines, logistical considerations can be more adequately addressed prior to deployments with the information provided by those with the most current experience in a given HN country. These could range from transportation assets available from the U.S. Embassy to dedicated HN assets available for the movement of HN personnel for training. Understanding what logistical support is available can facilitate the best utilization of U.S. resources instead of preparing for a myriad of contingencies that may otherwise be unknown. Significantly, the central consolidation of reports can effectively allow users to obtain information that can decrease the amount of time wasted on previously determined logistical considerations.

A final benefit of a central repository is its ability to provide general and specific knowledge of environmental factors within various countries. Readily accessible population information such as demographics would minimize the time U.S. elements used attempting to obtain known information. More importantly, the time required for turnaround of formats must be met in order to ensure up-to-date information is made available for currently deploying forces.

Evermore confusing is the numerous and unlinked databases used throughout the military services. Databases range from simple AARs to collated Lessons Learned (LL). The less capable computer user faces the daunting task of locating specific information throughout a myriad of unconnected websites. Additionally, the classification of certain materials proves to complicate this task further because the user needs to navigate through both secret and unclassified databases.

In July of 2004, SOCOM implemented the SOFLLRS by direction of the Secretary of Defense. The Secretary of Defense directed through the Defense Planning Guidance that LL will be used for validating requirements and was created as a LL processing tool (Salinger interview). This reporting system was instated as a resource that SOF could access and utilize to spread pertinent information to SOF regarding vetted LL for the benefit of other organizations; however, information is only vetted to the level at which it is submitted. This database utilizes post mission reports from ground commanders, specifically the AAR's and SODARS, to gather the information. This

database is still in its infancy and knowledge of it is not imbedded in the SOF communities.

SOFLLRs is a valid solution to the problematic nature of poor information dissemination. However, Major Salinger, USAF Lessons Learned Chief SOCOM, stated that the impetus for ground level commanders to complete this in addition to their primary AAR or SODARS format is the challenge that has yet to be solved. Currently, the SOFLLRs staff draws the information directly from the SODARS reports and then screens the information prior to inputting it into their database. The SOFLLRs staff who collates the LL realize that the work load of SOF operators who have returned from a mission is daunting. Therefore, the requirement of inputting data into the SOFLLRs thus far, remains at the individual, team, or unit level to push this information out. As previously stated, the adherence to SOCOM direction to complete these reports has not been widespread or standardized throughout the SOF community and this furthers the stovepipe of information that reaches the SOFLLRs database.

The majority of LL are coming from OIF and OEF. These lessons are vital in adapting to the dynamic combat environment and spreading information that may prove to be the difference in life or death. Apart from Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Philippines, there are very few pertinent LL coming in from other theaters, especially from the Navy and Air Force components. The Army has been the lead in submission of input to SOFLLRs as their SODARS format includes information that is more readily discernable than that of their Navy and Air Force counterparts. This directly affects the usable information for SOCOM.

The timely reporting of LL has increased in importance significantly with the initiation and continuation of OEF and OIF operations. The effective communication of LL can result in more effective TTPs by all SOF components in order to address common problems and recurring themes. Currently, LL are not formally submitted until units have completed a deployment and returned to the CONUS. This approach to the submission of LL creates a significant waiting period before the information is made accessible for other units. For example, the LL of a unit on a twelve month deployment would take over a year to become available to other units, meanwhile other units have deployed or are continuing operations without the addition of actionable information. Additionally, the

length of time between learning new lessons and the submission process of the information is often great and reduces the clarity of the now old information.

Major Salinger discussed that using the SOFLLRS system, ground commanders could send out LL while in theater with their daily reports to their respective Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOC). Instead of waiting until return to CONUS, units could disseminate information more quickly by sending out LL daily, near real time, that reflect their current conditions. This new approach would allow the immediate passing of LL to TSOC followed by their submission to SOCOM. Importantly, a ground commander with fresh information would be able to pass significant intelligence and allow others to benefit in a timely manner. If the commanders do this, it alleviates the additional burden upon the return CONUS.

Major Salinger stated that SOF could greatly benefit by examining the reports submitted by SOF and subsequently reevaluating the reporting efforts. There is a specific need to consolidate all these reports into one standardized format to minimize the amount of paperwork required by the ground commanders. This would help streamline the information and reduce the static administration work done by those individuals.

The interview with Major Salinger brought up several important factors that could effectively improve inter-service SOF communication with regards to SOFLLRS;

1. Standardizing the reporting requirements or establishing a reporting format that could fulfill all the requirements in one.
2. Marketing SOFLLRS to bridge the gap between those who are aware of the system and those who are not.
3. Facilitating a cultural change of SOF to help ground commanders understand the positive link between the administrative action of submitting LL and the problem solving action it could bring.
4. Continually raising the issue to the respective Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOC) leadership and standardizing their formats to SOCOM needs.

The chain, in which these reports flow, in NSW and SF, varies significantly between the services. Both NSW and SF require that its Platoon commanders or team leaders finish their documents in a timely manner post mission completion. For NSW, the document then flows from Platoon commander to NSW DET SOUTH in NSW Group 2,

where ideally it is then reviewed, and pushed to SOCSOUTH. It is again reviewed and then pushed up to Special Operations Command and inputted into the SODARS database. Since NSW does not follow the same document, SODARS vs. AAR, the reports, unless reporting a significant change, is not put into the system. NSW DET SOUTH maintains a paper copy in their filing system that they and Platoon commanders for future missions can refer to when needed.

SF utilizes the SODARS format for all their missions that are completed. Similar to NSW, the team leader is required to push this document up the chain in a timely manner to facilitate timely information sharing. The SF reporting chain follows a significantly different path than that of NSW. The team leaders complete the document where it is then sent to their respective Group. After review, it then goes to USASOC intelligence (G2) and then to SOCOM. Additionally, the team, and Group retain their own copies that can be accessed by team leaders with future missions to the same area.

NSW and SF have different requirements for training HN forces. Both are actively involved in Foreign Internal Defense missions, however; they rarely, if ever, train the same units. They do, however, train in the same locations and utilize the same logistical means to conduct training. Identifiable is the overlap in man-hours and funding that can be minimized prior to conducting a mission when birthing, rations, and logistical aspects are considered. Having a commonly accessible database that is readily available for both NSW and SF components that is strictly adhered to would provide much of the needed information typically sought during a Pre-Deployment Site Survey (PDSS). If both services were able to identify hotels and their proximity to training sites, restaurants, fitness centers, rental vehicles, and notable U.S. friendly establishments, more focus could lie on face to face contact with the HN.

The benefits that SF forces have when conducting missions in South America are due, in large part, to their geographical focus. SF is regionally oriented to utilize forces that have regional expertise, language capabilities, and continuity with the groups they train. SF maintains a specified group of individuals, 7<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group (Airborne),

to work the AOR. This regional orientation provides a functional framework which builds on the continual military to military contacts with HN forces. Additionally, the ODA team commanders have the ability to look at past METL and authoritatively determine the direction needed by HN forces for upcoming missions. This data is stored and collated in a SOCOM database.



## **VIII. HYPOTHETICAL IMPLEMENTATION**

The thesis concludes with a hypothetical example of how the recommended reporting changes can improve the efficiency of U.S. forces conducting missions that build on previously deployed U.S. SOF units. The most logical way to explain these recommendations is through an illustration of a typical deployment tasking. As previously discussed, NSW and SF commonly operate and conduct training in the same HN countries. Although they rarely train exactly the same personnel, information regarding how training was conducted and any issues that came up during that training are typically maintained at the unit level and not passed within the services. SF and NSW units commonly train in the same countries with HN personnel that have experience with both services, therefore it is important that units that are going to be operating understand what has been conducted. More clearly, the scenario will show how the left foot could more ideally coordinate with the right. The thesis will present an ideal scenario which will show how an operational handshake could occur with ideal conditions. Next, the scenario will discuss how a typical handover has been conducted in the past, and demonstrate how problematic this type of turnover has been to date. Finally, the culminating recommendations will discuss how to bridge the gap between the ideal and the real-world SOF coordination efforts.

To orchestrate an ideal scenario, we will use an Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) as the initial player receiving a counter narcotics training (CNT) deployment order that would be followed by a SEAL platoon. For the ease of illustration, the ODA utilized for discussion will be referred to as ODA-7XX and the SEAL platoon will be SEAL Team 4's Z platoon. ODA-7XX would be provided with an upcoming mission to Colombia that they would be tasked to conduct light infantry training in Cartagena with Colombian Army military forces. SEAL Team 4's Z platoon would also receive a tasking with the same Colombian Army unit to conduct similar light infantry training at a later date. At this stage, ODA-7XX, and SEAL Team 4 mission commanders are responsible for analyzing the higher commands, SOCSOUTH, intent and making assumptions in reference to the pending deployment. Once the initial terms of reference (ITOR) for the

upcoming deployment is released by SOCSOUTH, ODA-7XX, and Z platoon will independently begin collecting information regarding the specific requirements for that tasking.

Ideally, the mission commander would have:

1. Access to assets that the HN would utilize for real-world operations to include;
  - a. Insertion/extraction platforms such as helicopters
  - b. Communications equipment
  - c. Weaponry
2. Foreknowledge of the SODARS and SOFLLRS databases
3. Access to daily situation reports (SITREP)
4. Access to the most recent mission brief for the specified location and HN unit
5. Access to previous training received by the HN unit

In an ideal environment, every commander would have extensive knowledge of where to access the SODARS and SOFLLRS reports which contain valuable information for follow-on missions. This would include information regarding assets available for use in real-world operations by the HN forces to include, platforms, communications equipment and weaponry. Additionally, the commanders would be able to access the SITREPs from the deployed units on a regular basis to facilitate a better knowledge of the current situation on the ground. Accessibility to the deployed team's mission brief would provide both a background as well as a foundation for future training while maintaining continuity. Subsequently, the ability to review historical reports regarding HN training would allow the current ODA to better incorporate their training goals in relation to the needs of the HN unit being trained. Collectively, these would fill the essential gaps that are commonly seen and alleviate additional time and resources spent gathering unknown information.

The terms of reference (TOR), the finalized version of the ITOR, which is received at 145 days prior to deployment or D-145 would be published by SOCSOUTH. This would be delivered to the military group (MILGP) of the country where the training would take place. The MILGP is responsible for managing the U.S. Government foreign military assistance and training programs and it provides advisers, training, supplies, aid, and military sales in the specific HN country. At D-100 days, the HN would provide

names and vetting information to the U.S. Embassy in country. At D-70 days, the Department of State (DOS) is requested by the U.S. Embassy for approval of the Human Resources vetting. The approval for the vetting comes from the DOS in Washington at D-55 days. Five days later the Embassy and MILGP publish the vetting in a final TOR as well as any redeployment orders. The date of deployment arrives concurrently with the deployment order (DEPORD) which is signed by the Secretary of Defense. The ODA and SEAL units are authorized to deploy and begin training within 48 hours prior to deployment. During each subsequent step, the units are preparing all necessary equipment and administrative issues, in addition to planning.

Ideally, both units, ODA-7XX and Z platoon, would conduct a pre-deployment site survey (PDSS) 120 days prior to deployment to Cartagena, Colombia and. The purpose of the PDSS is to clarify the needs of the HN to fit the TOR and clarify any additional information. Once this is completed, a clearer picture of the logistical, administrative, and planning considerations are attained. Additionally, the advance echelon (ADVON) would brief their plan to SOCSOUTH and then deploy in advance of the main body to modify any last minute details and preparations for their arrival. Another purpose of the ADVON or PDSS would be to conduct a turnover from the forces already in country if possible. They would pass along any pertinent information regarding aspects of current training as well as showstoppers for future missions and how to remedy small problems.

Once the main body has arrived in country, they would receive an additional briefing for force protection measures and updated intelligence dissemination from the MILGP regional security officer (RSO) or the U.S. Embassy representative. Training would begin according to the preplanned schedule and the SF and NSW units would proceed accordingly. Typically these units would conduct a JCET, CNT, or CD training mission with the HN country with varying durations, ranging from one week to six months. Ideally this would all occur without any major problems either administratively or operationally.

The actual approach is less fluid than the ideal scenario that was reviewed in the previous paragraphs. For example, the established milestones are typically much different than the ideal scenario and may not be done until well past the established dates. Making

matters more difficult is that commander's lack an extensive knowledge of where to access previous reports in reference to their upcoming missions as well as what equipment the unit they will be training utilizes for real-world missions. In the absence of this knowledge, unit commanders are compelled to retrieve necessary information in any manner possible. This means through word-of-mouth, archived reports, personal contacts, and the possibility of previous knowledge in the specific country. Oftentimes, much of this information is unavailable through these channels and much essential information is left unanswered until late in the process. This often leaves the ODA in an information scramble.

The SODARS database can only be successful if information is input into the database continuously. Although SODARS reports are a known requirement, many commanders and team leaders fail to connect the importance for continuity and efficiency with their own reporting submission thus creating the ongoing information scramble cycle. Even if the commanders have a working knowledge of the system, oftentimes the information cannot be found in the system due to inconsistent submissions by previous elements. Importantly, this is problematic within the Army itself and does not even take into consideration the inabilities of the other services to access SODARS. This is why SOFLLRS has become dually important, due to its' accessibility and near real-time capability both in intra- and inter-service fora.

In concurrence with the ODA -7XX mission, NSW would receive the same tasking timeline that led to the ODA's deployment. As previously mentioned, the milestones are not adhered to with hard dates and NSW forces tackle the problem in much the same manner in which the ODA team did. They attempt to access pertinent information from previous deployments to the country by perusing the records and AAR's at DET SOUTH. NSW does not complete SODARS reports; they utilize a shortened version in their internal AAR and daily SITREPS that follow up to the SOCSOUTH level. NSW platoon commanders rarely have knowledge of other services missions and mainly focus on gaining information from previous commanders or their respective reports. Their information scramble parallels that of the ODA teams.

Ideally, NSW would conduct their PDSS and meet up with the ODA team in country and they would share their information freely to facilitate the working knowledge

of the forces that will be coming into theater, who they would be training, what was taught previously, what TTP's the unit is familiar with, and problems that occurred with regard to the previous deployment. Unfortunately, this rarely, if ever occurs. Normally, NSW forces are unaware of their SF counterparts operations in country and vice versa. This must be addressed at the SOCSOUTH level between the services by having a standard or, at least base line knowledge of who is conducting missions and who has previously conducted missions as well as how they were conducted and where the information can be retrieved. Having knowledge of each others' missions at the highest levels down to the platoon commander and team leader levels would ease much of the disjointed nature of the services.

Platoon commanders and team leaders should be encouraged by their respective leadership to foster relationships with their counterpart's service. This could be as simple as having a phone list and email accounts of the other services to involving each other in coordinated joint training. Having the ability to pick up the phone and contact personnel with pertinent information should become commonplace. Simply, information sharing at the lowest levels will prevent problems with continuity of the HN at the highest levels and will foster a more professional working environment.

What the situation boils down to is that two services are conducting similar missions, with similar HN personnel, in the same countries, often at the same time, independent of each other. What is needed are a few keys that allow the left foot to know what the right is doing so that the machine can run more efficiently and effectively with each other.

In order to effectively increase the handshake between NSW and SF, a few adjustments to the current manner of doing business must take place. These are:

At the service Group level, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Educate the team leaders and platoon commanders on the reporting systems in place and mandate and follow up on their completion.
2. Create a database or modify current databases to facilitate inter-service accessibility and increase intelligence sharing.

3. Modify the reporting styles to reflect the same format for both services utilize so that they can be easily understood by sister service components.
4. Utilize the SOFLLRS system during deployment in addition to daily SITREPs at the end of each block of HN training.
5. Distribute an overall tasking list from SOCOM encompassing both services and including points of contact for each mission.

The education of the ground-level commanders on the necessity of the reporting systems in place should be included in the professional development of the key leaders of the ODAs and SEAL platoons. By increasing the awareness and benefits of the reporting system, the leaders will become more attuned to the need to submit their completed reports during and after their deployments. Additionally, the significance of this education will be to provide a broader understanding of the importance of reporting on the overall activities of SOF and the inter-service benefits of timely reporting.

The creation of a centralized, inter-service accessible database or modification of the current systems along with enforcement of submission of these reports would contribute to the ease in which intelligence is shared. In addition to creating a centralized database, standardizing the formats that are submitted would also facilitate a standard by which all services could understand. Utilization of the SOFLLRS system during deployment would likely provide near real-time reporting and significantly reduce the information scramble. In conjunction to the implementation of the SOFLLRS system, SOCOM could help facilitate an inter-service handshake by disseminating to NSW and SF, a quarterly or biannual tasking list that includes detailed information; points of contacts, emails, phone numbers. This information would most likely increase the ability of the respective service leadership to maintain service to service contact from the top down.

At the team/platoon level, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Encourage face to face contact between the services either through on-the-ground mission commanders and incoming forces, or in CONUS training, or both.

2. Overcome inter-service animosity by familiarizing with the other services TTP's and encouraging contact.
3. Utilize the MILGP and U.S. Embassy in country to make contact with teams that are in country and require a meeting to exchange ideas as well as maintain all inbrief/outbrief information from previous missions for access and additional information.
4. Create a permanent liaison position at the SOCSOUTH level or the group level, that collates information from both services tasking and informs the next platoon commander or team leader of the details.

NSW and SF, in most cases, are not currently coordinating their efforts in country when training the HN forces. This, as previously discussed, has been problematic in that neither service is familiar with each others' manner of doing operations or their TTP's. The encouragement of maintaining contact between the services would prove dually beneficial, both for the SOF that are conducting missions and for the HN as well. Having team leaders or platoon commanders meet in face to face meetings can help alleviate this lack of coordination. By encouraging these meetings, NSW and SF forces could become more intimately knowledgeable and more easily build off each others style and training in country. Face to face meetings could take place while conducting training in CONUS, OCONUS, or both. This would also help to overcome some of the inter-service animosity that currently exists by creating professional working relationships with their counterparts. Although rivalry is common and healthy, much of the animosity is due to a lack of understanding of each other and their TTP's.

In addition to the previous points, the SOF forces need to utilize the MILGPs and Embassies to aid in their professional relationships. The MILGP's and Embassies should also foster these relationships by providing each service with points of contact and meeting and discussion location for forces to share information openly with each other while in country.

The last recommendation offered could possibly be the key to easing coordination efforts for forces on the ground in country. Instead of creating liaison roles in each country, there should be a permanent liaison role implemented within NSW and SF that

coordinates, collects, and disseminates the information for each service. These liaisons could maintain and ensure that the proper information gets to the team leaders and platoon commanders as well as coordinate CONUS based meetings, where commanders can discuss past, current, and future operations possibly incorporating each service into training with each other.

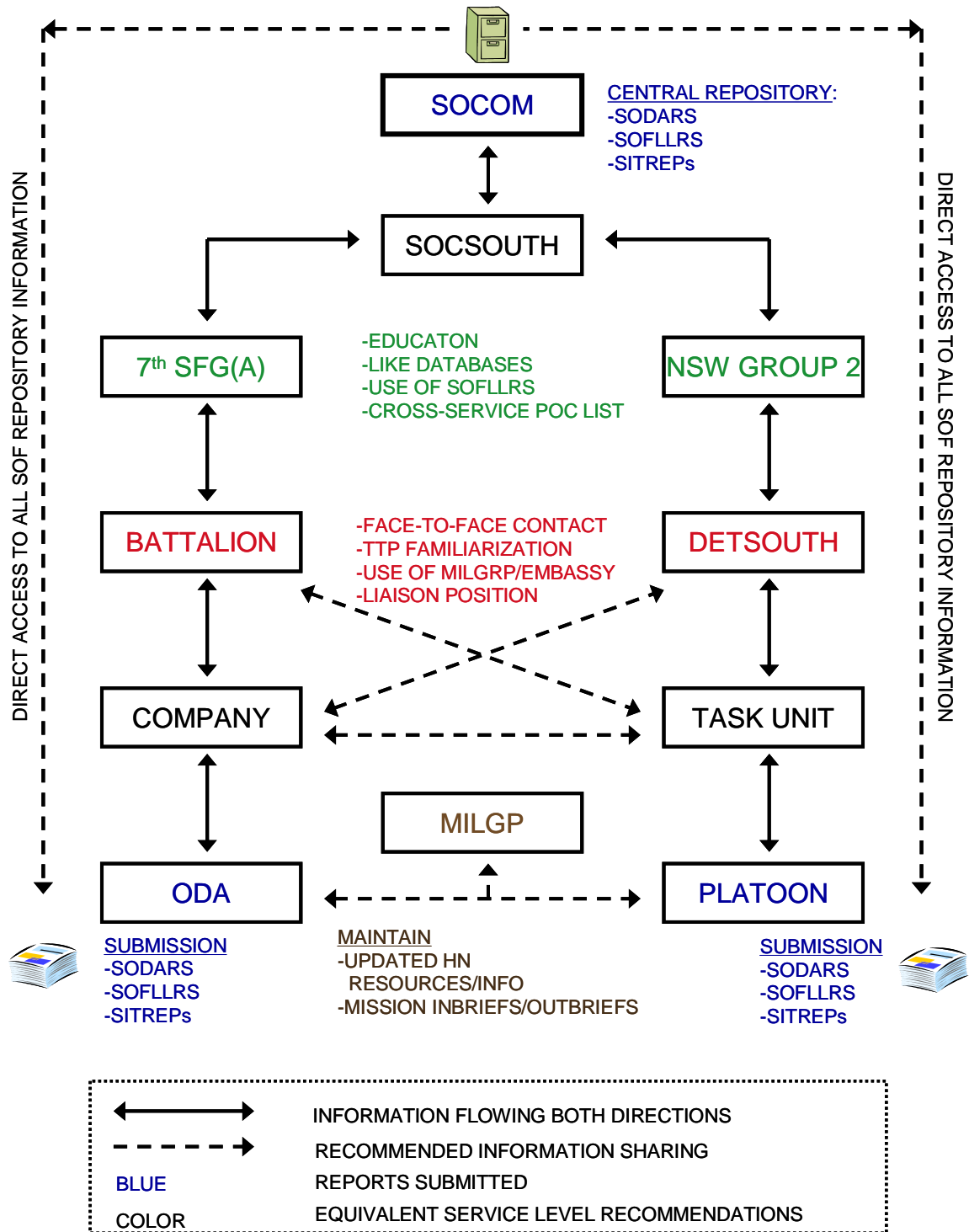
These recommendations, collectively, would create multiple benefits for SOF.

1. Prepare the HN to address their specific contingencies.
2. Ease the burden of inter-service information sharing.
3. Facilitate a working knowledge of sister service TTP's.
4. Reduce inter-service rivalry.
5. Increase the ability of SOF to address future conflicts through a more complete intelligence picture.

The following flowchart delineates the recommendations set forth in previous pages. It shows recommendations at the SF's Group, Battalion, and Team levels as well as at the NSW's Group, DETSOUTH, Task Unit, and Platoon levels. Additionally, the flowchart illustrates recommended information-sharing components that can benefit from a better inter-service communication.



Table 3. Proposed Inter-service Handshake



Currently, there is a disparity between what senior commanders envision for U.S. SOF unit rotations in Latin America and what actually occurs. Through the implementation of the recommendations made in this thesis, SOCOM, SOUTHCOM, SOCSOUTH, NSW, and SF all stand to benefit by streamlining and fully integrating their efforts. Whether these recommendations are taken in part or in whole, they will provide a solid foundation for improvement. It is paramount to address these issues while the theater is not currently an area of major conflict. The key is creating a functional and standardized “operational handshake” between NSW and SF to address transition problems before they are unmanageable. By implementing these recommendations, the HN also stands to benefit by increasing their capability to address future struggles when they inevitably arise. Decreasing the gap between the perfect scenario and the current situation will ensure coordination and foster a functional and professional SOF relationship.

## IX. CONCLUSION

This project began with the intent of deciphering the differences inherent in NSW and SF to address the level of effectiveness within to help further their operational handshake. It is clear that, although both services have similar end-states of full and effective employment in the world's conflicts, their approaches do not readily feed off each other's capabilities and strengths. This thesis has taken an in-depth approach at examining SOUTHCOM and its regional stability factors, the threats to the region, and the Global War on Terrorism. Additionally, this thesis examined two specific case studies that are directly affecting the international community of South America in Colombia and the Tri-border region and how they are tied within the GWOT. Next, the thesis identified the role of Special Operations Forces, their definitional functionality, directives, and utility within Operation Iraqi Freedom. Finally, the thesis applies these concepts into the SOUTHCOM theater and identifies the operational and informational requirements, identifies the problematic accessibility and information sharing process and proposes possible solutions to help facilitate more comprehensive inter-service coordination.

The intent of this thesis is not to 'fix' the disjointed nature of coordination between NSW and SF, but rather to identify that indeed there are problems. The problems identified relate specifically to SOUTHCOM and more generally to cultural inefficiencies within the communities that encompass Special Operations. The process of identifying problems and addressing them, in the case of the Department of Defense, is slow and cumbersome, oftentimes involving a cultural change. Changing the manner in which information is processed and disseminated is a major undertaking, one which can have effects not only between NSW and SF, but within conventional forces as well. The impetus for making change needs to be effected at the schoolhouse as well as on the battlefield. If change is to occur, the leaders within SOF must begin the education of their operators at their parent unit levels and plant the seeds today that will come to fruition in the future. This thesis *is* however, one of the first steps in identifying the need for a more comprehensive understanding of other services.

SOF is in a unique paradigm. A paradigm which involves keeping forces operationally focused, while balancing future endogenous (platoon/team level documentation) and exogenous (higher command level documentation) administrative needs to facilitate those operations. Through problem recognition, a more comprehensive approach to facilitating the necessary cultural changes to address those problems becomes palatable and with time, malleable. Through this process, we have identified the necessity for informational and operational coordination between SF and NSW and it is through this process that solutions can take root and help alleviate future internal problems. With the Global War on Terror in full swing and SOF as a key player in that fight, it is only through conquering internal problems that we can effectively address external strife and make headway in both arenas.

## X. APPENDICES

### A. APPENDIX A (CIP ONLINE DATA)

Table 4. 2003: SOUTHCOM Mission Areas

Country	Title Training	No. of Trainees	Location	Students' Units	US Units
Bolivia	Riverine	20	Chimore	Blue Devils Task Force	USMC
Bolivia	Riverine	30	La Paz	Fuerza Contra Terrorista Conjuntas (FCTC)	NSWU-4 NSWG-2
Bolivia	Riverine	100	La Paz	Bolivian Navy and Special Operation Police	NSWU-4
Bolivia	Staff Training	40	Chimore	Ninth Division - CHIPIRIRI BN	7th SFG (A)
Chile	JCET	50	Santiago	Grupo Operaciones De Policia Especial 7 SFG (GOPE) of the Carabineros De Chile	7 SFG
Colombia	Huey Training II	30	Melgar	COLAR	Contractor (Lockheed Martin (TAFT))
Colombia	Light Infantry	80	Espinal	CNP Counter Narotics Division (DIRAN)	7th SFG (a)
Colombia	Light Infantry	80	Facatativa and Sibate	CNP COUNTER NARCOTICS DIVISION (DIRAN)	7th SFG (a)
Colombia	Light Infantry	195	Espinal	Colombian National Police	7TH SFG (A)
Colombia	Light Infantry	305	Tolemaida - Larandia -Barrancon	Colombian SF Comando BN	7th SFG (A)
Colombia	Light Infantry	306	Tolemaida/Sumapaz	SF Commandos	7TH SFG(A)
Colombia	Light Infantry	450	Arauca	18 Bde	7th SFGA
Colombia	Light Infantry	450	Saravena and Arauca	18th SF Brigade	1 ODA - 7th SFG - 96th CA - 16th SOW - 4th Psyops
Colombia	Light Infantry	450	Tolemaida	1st SF BDE	7TH SFG (A)
Colombia	Light Infantry	450	Tolemaida	1st SF BD BrigadeE	7th SFG
Colombia	Light Infantry	550	Larandia	1st CD BDE	7th SFG
Colombia	Light Infantry	550	Larandia	1ST CD BDE	7TH SFG (A)
Colombia	Light Infantry	1500	Espinal - Larandia - Tolemaida and Sibate	CNP Carabineros-Group 1 and Diran	7TH SFG (A)
Colombia	Panning and Assistance	200	Bogota - Barancon	BAFLIM 60 - 70 - 80 - 90	NSWU-4

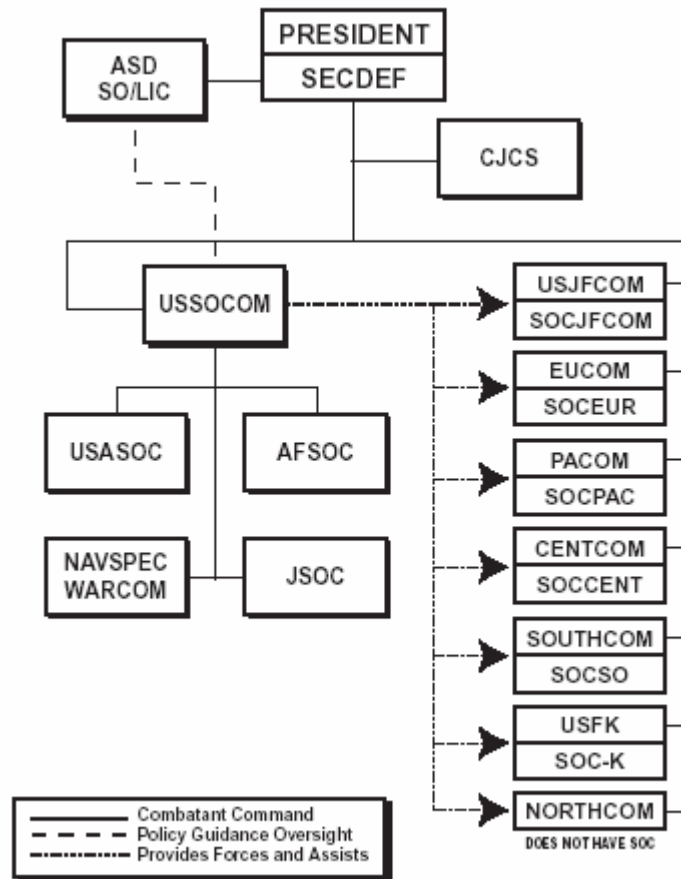
Colombia	Planning Assistance	50	Bogota	COLMIL	7TH SFGA
Colombia	Riverine	200	Arauca - Yati	COLMAT Elements Riverine Combat	USMC
Colombia	Riverine	30	Cartagena	Colombian Marine Special Forces Battalion-1	NSWU-4
Colombia	Riverine	31	Puerto Carreno	Marine Riverine Battalion 40	NSWU 4/SBT/NSWG-2
Colombia	Riverine	40	Yati	Colombian Marine Corps Riverine Bn	NSWU-4
Colombia	Riverine	40	Puerto Inidria	Marine Battalion 50	NSWU-4 NSWG-2
Colombia	Riverine	45	Bogota and Yati	Colombian Marine Riverine BN	NSWU-4
Colombia	Riverine	50	Cartagena - Covenas and Barrancon	Colombian AFEAU - Marine Special Forces Battalion	NSWTT (NSWU-4 - CSST - TCS Element)
Colombia	Riverine	50	Cartegena	Colombian Navy Special Dive Unit - Submarine Comman	NSWU-4
Colombia	Riverine	60	Cartegena	Colombian Navy Marines Special Forces Battalion 1	NSWU-4
Colombia	Riverine	60	Cali	Selected members of Colombian Commandos	NSWU-4
Colombia	Riverine	100	Cartegena	Colombian Atlantic Coast Guard	NSWU-4 - SBT DET CARIB
Colombia	Riverine	200	Cartegena - Covenas - Barrancon	Colombian Commandos Especiales del Ejercito (CEE)	NSWU-4 NSWG-2
Colombia	Search and Rescue	126	Tolemaida - Apiay - Melgar	COLAR HELICOPTER BATTALION/COLAF CACOM 2 & 4	16th SOW & 720th STG
Colombia	Staff Training	80	Larandia - Tres Esquinas - Cali	Colombian 12 BDE	7th SFG - USASOC - 16th SOW 720th STG - 96th CA BN
Colombia	Staff Training	550	Larandia - Tres Esquinas	1st CN BDE/BACNA STAFF/SUPPORT BN/2nd CD BN	7th SFG (A)
Costa Rica	Maritime Interdiction	35	Murcielago	Costa Rican National Coast Guard	NSWU-4
Dominican Republic	Maritime Interdiction	50	Salinas	Commandos NAVALES	NSWU-4
Ecuador	Riverine	40	Guayaquil	Ecuadorian Marine - Cuerpo Infanteria De Marina	NSWU-4
Ecuador	Riverine	40	Quito	Ecuadorian Marine Corps	NSWU-4
Ecuador	Riverine	50	Guayquil	ECUADORIAN SOF AND NATIONAL POLICE	USMC Riverine Operations Seminar Team
Ecuador	Search and Rescue	100	Quito	Ecuadorain ALA DE Combate	16th Sow and 720th STG
Honduras	JCET	50		HONDURAN NAVY, PUERTO CASTILLA, HONDURAS AND 15TH BRIGADE HONDURAN ARMY TRUJILLO, HONDURAS (50)	ST-4 PLT E, NSWU-4, ST-4 PLT F, NSWG-2

Nicaragua	JCET	47		BRIGADA DE FUERZAS ESPECIALES	ST-4, NSWU-4
Panama	JCET	36	Panama	PANAMANIAN NATIONAL POLICE (PNP) (13) PANAMANIAN NATIONAL MARITIME SERVICE (SMN) (13) INSTITUTIONAL PROTECTIVE SERVICE (SPI) (13) / 36	NSW-4, 160 SOAR, NSWG-2
Panama	JCET	40	FT Sherman	PANAMANIAN GRUPO DE OPERACIONES ESPECIALES (GOE)	NSW-4, ST-8
Panama	Light Infantry	40	Colon City	Panamanian National Police	7 <sup>th</sup> SFG (A)
Panama	Light Infantry	60	Panama City Colon	Panamanian National Police	7th SFG
Panama	Riverine	60	Panama City Colon	SPI's Special Reaction Group	NSWU-4 - NSWG-2
Panama	Staff Training	100	Former Howard AFB - and Fort Shermon	Panama National Police	7 SFG (A) FOB 71 -SOT-A - CA - PSYOP
Paraguay	JCET	100	Asuncion	CIMOE, SENAD, Marine Comandos	7 SFG
Paraguay	Riverine	30	Asuncion - Ciudad Del Este -	Senad and the Marine Comandos	NSWU-4
Peru	JCET	32		FUERZAS DE OPERACIONES ESPECIALES (FOES) PERUVIAN NAVAL SPECIAL FORCES	7 SFG
Peru	Light Infantry	40	Santa Lucia	Directiva Nacional Antidrogas	7 <sup>th</sup> SFG (A)
Peru	Riverine	30	Loreto	Instructors from the Riverine Operations School	NSWU-4
Peru	Riverine	100	Lima Pucallpa Contamana	- Peruvian National Police - Peruvian Coast Guard	NSWU-4 - Special Boat Unit

## B. APPENDIX B (SERVICE COMPONENT DESCRIPTION)

The following chart illustrates the chain of command flow that Army SF and Navy SOF utilize. As depicted in the chart, SOCOM is the central point from which all SOF service components receive direction and implement force allocations to regional combatant commands.

Table 5. SOF Service Component Description



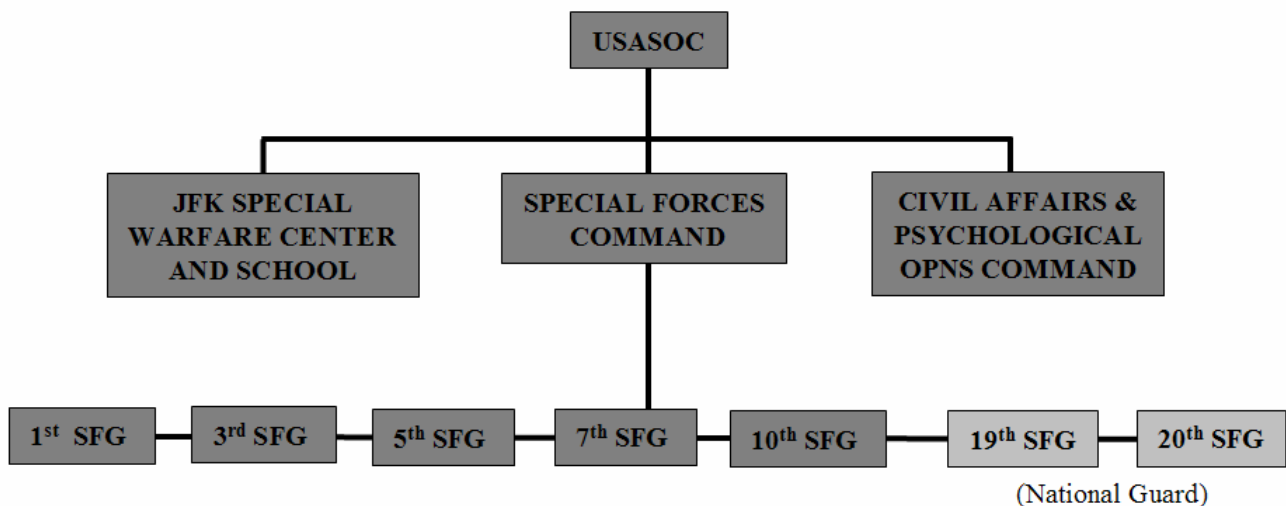


## 1. Army SF

USASOC is the Army component of SOCOM. The Army SOF headquarters is located at Ft Bragg, NC and is responsible for all SOF forces including the Rangers, Civil Affairs and Psychological operations, 160<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR), and Special Operations support in addition to the Special Forces Groups (SFG). The U.S. Army Special Forces Command (USASFC) is a subordinate command to USASOC.

The U.S. Army Special Forces Command is responsible to train, validate, and prepare Special Forces (SF) units to deploy and execute operational requirements for the U.S. military's Geographic Combatant Commanders throughout the world. There are five active duty SF groups and two U.S. Army National Guard SF groups. Each group has three battalions consisting of three operational companies. The operational companies have six Operational Detachment Alphas (ODA), or A teams, assigned to them. The ODA is the heart and soul of SF operations. SF units perform five doctrinal missions: Foreign Internal Defense (FID), Unconventional Warfare (UW), Special Reconnaissance (SR), Direct Action (DA), and Counter Terrorism (CT) (USSOCOM Posture Statement, 2004, p.15).

Table 6. USASOC Command Relationship

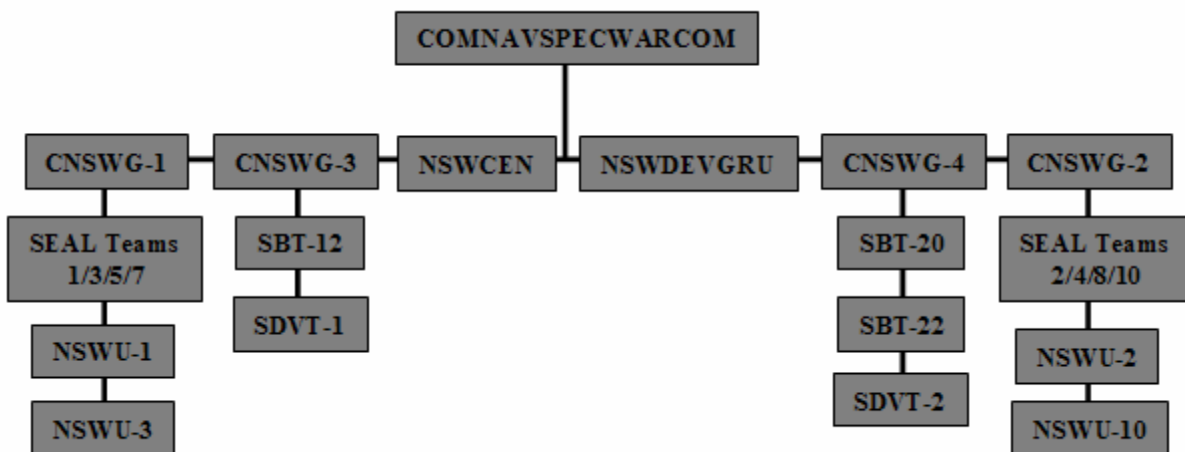


## 2. Navy SOF

NAVSPECWARCOM is the Navy component of SOCOM. Established at Naval Amphibious Base, Coronado, California in April 1987, NAVSPECWARCOM oversees the organization, training, equipping and readiness of all active duty and reserve Navy SOF. The SEAL teams are located on both the East and West coasts respectively and their parent organizations are Group 1 and 3 in Coronado, California and Group 2 and 4 in Little Creek, Virginia.

Naval Special Warfare Center (NSWC) provides basic and advanced instruction and training in maritime special operations to U.S. military and government personnel and members of other allied armed forces. SEAL Teams are maritime, multipurpose combat forces organized, trained and equipped to conduct a variety of special missions in all operational environments and threat conditions. SEAL special mission areas include: Unconventional Warfare (UW), Direct Action (DA), Counter terrorism (CT), Special Reconnaissance (SR), Foreign Internal Defense (FID), Information warfare (IW), Security Assistance, Counter-drug Operations (CD), Personnel Recovery, and Hydrographic Reconnaissance (USSOCOM Posture Statement, 2004, p. 20-21).

Table 7. NSW Command Relationship



In late 2003, early 2004, Naval Station Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, closed its doors and relocated SOCSOUTH to collocate with SOUTHCOM in Florida. The draw down of Roosevelt Roads entailed the movement of the forward deployable company of 7<sup>th</sup> SFG to Ft Bragg, NC. NSW unit 4 was disassembled and NSW DET SOUTH, previously located at Unit 4 in Puerto Rico, relocated to Little Creek, Virginia. SOCSOUTH still retains responsibility for all SOUTHCOM SOF missions. NSW DET SOUTH is now responsible for all Naval SOUTHCOM missions that are conducted by SOF operational units in theater. All SOF operational units are subordinate to SOCSOUTH, SOUTHCOM, and SOCOM. Any JCET, CNT, or other missions and exercises are planned, prepared, and organized at SOCSOUTH and are delegated down to the respective SOF service components.

Naval Special Warfare, on the other hand, recently moved to a system that is not as regionally oriented as their SF counterparts, called NSW 21. The size of NSW is significantly smaller than that of the Army SF and does not have the personnel to retain in specific theaters such as South America. Prior to implementing this system, NSW was regionally oriented and reaped many of the same benefits as SF forces with their regional expertise, and language capabilities, and continual face to face contact. NSW 21 has significantly reduced the ability of Platoon commanders to effectively communicate their desires for training, METLs, and overall needs to properly conduct missions in South America. Therefore, to meet the needs and demands of the regional combatant commanders, NSW allocates forces to meet the SOF theater requirements. Significantly, since the initiation of the GWOT, South America has virtually fallen off the map for NSW forces as they no longer have any permanently allocated SOUTHCOM platoons.

In early October, 2001 NSW implemented major organizational changes to fit the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This concept was designed to reorganize the manner in which NSW trained, equipped, supported, and deployed its personnel in support of regional and theater commanders. NSW 21 developed the NSW squadron idea, reorganized the communities' players, training programs, optimized command and control for deployed forces and developed the NSW C4ISR infrastructure. Although this concept has allowed for a more flexible response to the regional and theater commanders,

it has significantly reduced the regional orientation of SEAL operators. SEALs now must be able to focus on two regions of the world, rather than one.

Conducting a global War on Terrorism requires a large number of highly specialized and qualified personnel; this number is even larger when non-critical peacetime missions are still considered requirements by SOF leadership. Moreover, there is reluctance among combatant commanders to reduce engagement “requirements” such as theater security cooperation events in various NATO countries. Because the NSW community is fulfilling all of these various SEAL engagement roles during wartime, there is an even higher corresponding demand for NSW operators, specifically SEALs.

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